THE RETREAT ON CIVIL RIGHTS **CAREY McWILLIAMS**

THE
NATION

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THE TEAMSTER MESS
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LETTERS

split on the Left

Brooklyn, N.Y.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that Robert Karen passes over the departure of the ILGWU "and most of the party's intellectual following" [!] from the Liberal Party "by the late 1960s" in just that one sentence [*The Nation,* Sept. 20], since one of his chief authorities is Gus Tyler—but the event does merit some amplification.

The fact is that the departure of the ILGWU was occasioned by the party's decision to open up a full discussion in its clubs on the issue of the Vietnamese War and the party's prior support of that war. The ILGWU leadership was furious over the notion; they ran Murray Baron in a 1968 primary against Senator Javits because the latter was too much of a "dove" for their taste. At one discussion in Brooklyn, I was informed by an ILGWU leader—with a straight face—that the Labor Leadership Assembly for Peace held in Chicago in 1967 (and reported fully in *The Nation*) was "packed" with students from the University of Wisconsin!

Square this, if you will, with Tyler's nostalgia for the "good old days": "In those days . . . the Liberal clubs were very real things. You had arguments, debates. . . ." Debates about what? Certainly not the Vietnamese War—that, according to ILGWU dictum, was *verboten. . . .* *Henry Foner, Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Labor Committee, Liberal Party*

Is Nader the one?

Willis, Mich.

In the August 30th editorial section of *The Nation,* I was implored to try saying "Ralph Nader for President"—a thought that occasionally trips through my brain. I must admit, though, that I was disappointed with respect to references to the Gallup poll which placed Nader ahead of McCarthy, Udall and Jackson, and the Drummond poll which placed him ahead of Kennedy, Wallace and Muskie. My mind asks—but behind whom? Educate me, enlighten me! I want to know "what kind of President" we Americans "want in 1976"? *Maureen McWalters*

gun control and the Church

Washington, D.C.

James D. Wright says in "The Demography of Gun Control" [*The Nation,* Sept. 20] ". . . it might be worthwhile [for gun advocates] to approach the organizations of the 'bottom-half' of the society—specifically, the unions and maybe even the Catholic Church—as potential allies. Is it really possible that these 'reactionary' organizations would support progressive weapons legislation?"

The answer to Wright's question is, "Yes." The United States Catholic Conference, the national level action agency of the Catholic Church, has already endorsed and is advocating strong measures to control handguns. Last July the Social Development and World Peace Committee of the Catholic Conference adopted a strong statement calling for "effective and courageous action to control handguns, leading to their eventual elimination from society.". . . The Bishops' Committee said that only by prohibiting the importation, manufacture, sale, possession and use of handguns with reasonable and tight exceptions will a comprehensive response to handgun violence be provided. . . .

Wright's article provides helpful insight into the true nature of grass-roots support and opposition to gun control and we welcome his findings regarding the relatively high level of support for strong handgun control among Catholics. However, his characterization of the Catholic Church as "reactionary" and his ignorance of our position indicates that he may be out of touch with both the tradition and current activity within the Catholic community on social justice issues. . . . *John Carr, Coordinator for Special Issues Office of Domestic Social Development United States Catholic Conference*

The editors welcome letters from readers but regret that space limitations often prevent publication of those of more than 250 words.

EDITORIALS

The Retreat on Civil Rights

Twenty-one years after *Brown* vs. *Board of Education* and twenty years after Rosa Parks refused to move back in the Montgomery bus, a shameful retreat is being sounded on the issue of civil rights and equal justice. It began, in a sense, with Richard Nixon who, by putting the word "forced" in front of bussing and then adding "for racial balance," projected a cunning formula for the retreat. Later pronouncements about "benign neglect" and the total brush-off of civil rights issues during his years in the White House merely carried forward the political strategy he had plotted. Since then, with the bussing issue taking on ever greater political significance outside the South, the national mood has changed. The fervor that supported the early civil rights movement has largely vanished. President Ford has not merely criticized Judge Garrity's efforts in Boston but has hurried the retreat by undercutting Supreme Court decisions with talk of "quality education" which, in the context of what is happening, is rankly hypocritical.

The same retreat is evident in the House and the Senate, in both parties, with "liberals" often in the vanguard. Nor is it merely politicians who are cutting their commitments to the concept of equal justice. To cite but one of many current instances, Father James J. Sheehan, director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, has charged that "racism has been relegated to the back burner" as a moral concern. "The disinterest is deafening." A story in *The Wall Street Journal* of September 15 points to the general lack of fervor, the decline in commitment, the lack of unity in the civil rights movement. To its eternal credit, the NAACP has never wavered in its basic commitments, but some black organizations have joined a retreat that is, in one sense, part of the new conservative chic. We have fashions in ideas, as in skirts and trousers, and in today's world civil rights is old-fashioned, quaint, passé.

As to "forced" bussing to achieve "racial balance," Marian Wright Edelman in two brilliant pieces for *The New York Times* has demolished the myths that sustain the resistance to desegregation. The distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* segregation is, as she points out, almost meaningless. Those so-called "neighborhood patterns" turn out to be, on close examination, products of artful manipulation and intentional segregation. The neighborhood school is not an inviolable tradition; school bussing has a long, distinguished tradition in American education. Forty-eight states authorize it. Neither the average amount nor the length of bussing has greatly increased. Of course some black parents worry about the hazards of bussing—as do white parents—but a survey of black middle-class parents in Louisville indicates that most of them are convinced, and rightly so, that their children will get a better education once whites have a stake in the schools black children attend. The realism of these parents cannot be dismissed or rejected. *Of course* it is unfair to compel blacks to bear disproportionate burdens in achieving desegregation. As Edelman points out: "There is not one of us who would will this legacy of misery to our children. But

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racism is not something you can avoid, even in the confines of Harlem. Racial ignorance and insensitivity are not cured by keeping children apart."

The "forced" bussing agitation is designed to maintain a separation of the races; that is its clear purpose. The basic issue is not bussing but discrimination. Segregated school systems violate the Constitution. The legal issue was never in doubt and it has been resolved. Segregation by law or ordinance is unconstitutional and so is segregation achieved by "segregatory intent." It is wildly unfair to blame desegregation for the present-day ills of public education, many of which have been created by decades of segregation and discriminatory neglect. Carl Rowan, the columnist, puts it tersely: "It isn't bussing which is wrecking . . . cities and their public school systems: it is deeply ingrained racism that millions of white Americans can't shuck off—not even in the face of rulings by the most eminent judges in the land."

In the light of this record it is morally offensive for the President to talk about "quality education" as an alternative to bussing. Minority children will never achieve equal educational opportunities in a segregated school system. As part of the general retreat from *Brown* vs. *Board of Education*, the record of desegregation efforts has been willfully distorted and the achievements often ignored or brushed aside as being of slight importance. Bussing presents problems, but what is the alternative? To do nothing about separate and unequal schools for black children is merely to store up more trouble. And morally it is intolerable to ask an oncoming generation to defer its expectations of equal justice until the white majority is willing to honor the ideals to which as a nation we profess ourselves committed.

The real question is, why is there such a marked absence of "quality education" in the communities where blacks and other minorities—including many children of white working-class parents—live? Does anyone really believe that this inequality, so far as blacks are concerned, can be corrected as long as segregation prevails? Moreover, those who are currently undermining the civil rights movement are making themselves the cat's-paws of a larger political strategy, which is to keep working Americans divided along racial, ethnic and religious lines. "What would happen if blacks and whites weren't fighting each other over the false issue of bussing," asks Amiri Baraka, "and instead were collectively mobilized to find out why they both are unemployed?" Bayard Rustin makes the same point: "For everything blacks now demand, whether it's health care, housing, or jobs, there are four to six whites with the same needs" (both quotes from *The Wall Street Journal*).

Dr. Leslie Goldstein (University of Delaware) puts the issue the way it should be stated:

> In principle, after all, the advocacy of separation is a kind of moral surrender; it asserts that the quest for racial justice within America can never succeed. Complete justice for black Americans, as for every other of our ethnic minorities, demands meaningful integration—not simply integration on busses and in restaurants but also integration into the institutions that allocate the valued resources of our society. . . . Real integration means integrating the learned professions, the corporate managements, and the legislatures of the land. In short it means, in a practical sense, what the inte-

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grationists have always said it means, equal rights, or, to use an even older word, justice. To demand anything less than this is to demean one's dignity. (*Western Political Quarterly.*)

Yet, sadly, with the bicentennial celebrations in full swing, a cowardly retreat is being carried out on the issue of civil rights. This retreat enjoys support and sponsorship at high political levels and appears to have the sanction and approval of a majority, although of this one cannot be sure because at the moment civil rights lacks the kind of leadership to which the people might respond. But at the moment Rosa Parks deserves an apology: her countrymen have let her down. *Carey McWilliams*

Moynihan Strikes Again

It will come as no surprise to those who have studied his career that Ambassador Daniel Moynihan's habit of baiting the opposition has succeeded in disrupting a shrewd Washington initiative at the U.N. By quoting with approval a reference to President Idi Amin of Uganda as "this racist murderer . . . [who] is head of the Organization of African Unity," Moynihan has messed up the Kissinger strategy—which seemed to be working quite well—of keeping the OAU at arm's length from the Arab states. Because Amin, by rotation, happens now to head the OAU, the African states felt compelled to denounce the characterization of him as "unfriendly" and "undiplomatic" and were, of course, promptly supported by Arab spokesmen. It would not have been out of order for Moynihan to rebuke Amin for what he has had to say about Israel and kindred topics—he deserved it—but to rope in the Organization for African Unity, and just at this time, was the act of an inveterate pop-off artist whose primary concern has always been with headlines and personal posturing. Encouraged by the claque that invariably applauds such stunting, he can be relied upon to cause further trouble at the U.N.

Fragile Mantle

President Ford's political advisers face a tough problem: how best to project the candidacy of an unelected incumbent who, in the words of one of them, necessarily wears "a fragile mantle of authority." Elected Vice Presidents who inherit the Presidency are a familiar story, but with Ford the situation is unique and it worries his advisers. He is a well-known, very commonplace man who sits in the Oval Office but doesn't seem to belong there. So his handlers have been trying all sorts of tactics. They have had him "stand tall and straight"; they have encouraged him to be "open and forthcoming"—and to be accessible. They have taken him on junkets to Vladivostok and Tokyo, to Brussels and Madrid. After *Mayagüez* they had him come on strong, like Theodore Roosevelt. But still the mantle of authority rests awkwardly on his manly shoulders. So they have encouraged him to start campaigning months in advance of the Presidential season and to crisscross the country shaking hands and dodging bullets. But these tours have been a disaster: his speeches have been dreadful because he has had nothing of consequence to say and, not surprisingly, his ratings have steadily declined. Today, according to *Time*, a majority of those who stated an opinion no longer consider him acceptable as the next President. So Lee Nunn has been relieved of his duties as director of the President Ford Committee—an act of panic which, at this stage, is rather like removing a baseball manager during spring training.

What the President should do, of course, is project an image of being the hardest working President in the nation's history, burning the midnight oil, huddling with advisers, sticking at his desk, insisting that he will not waste time campaigning in these troubled times. Instead, he continues to opt for majorettes and crowds of 150 people behind fences at airports. Since August—more than a year before the election—he has campaigned in twenty-two states, spent thirty-five days on the road and flown 27,000 miles, with no refund to the U.S. Treasury for a salary unearned. And already his advisers are "discounting" in advance the possible loss of the New Hampshire primary as being of little importance. At the same time these same advisers persuaded Ford to ask for $13 million in additional funds for his personal protection at almost the moment when he exercised his thirty-ninth veto: of a child lunch program. Ford's problem is not merely with his mantle of authority or that he is our first unelected President but that, as Garry Wills has written, he is a man whose only mystery is that he has no mystery. He is dull; he is uninteresting. And being no actor he cannot project an image of being what he is not. So the harder he campaigns the more he succeeds in affirming his mediocrity. Thanks to his current campaign tactics, the nation is being exposed to the real Ford of whom his good friend Tip O'Neill has said, "Jerry is a lovely guy but maybe a lousy President. You have to see a lot of him to know how little there is to see."

Franco's Apologists

The press and the network news services in this country, with some honorable exceptions, have reacted defensively and stupidly to the tidal wave of protest in Europe over the Spanish executions. The unstated assumption seems to be that, since the renewal of the bases pact keeps Spain "on our side," it is the obligation of all good men and true to rally round Henry Kissinger and defend this country's attitude toward the executions as "correct" and "proper."

The apologists go still further, charging that the Europeans and those in this country who agree with them apply a dual standard; the Russians and East Europeans, we are told, as though it were news, have been guilty of similar atrocities. But such special pleading is miles wide of the mark. Spain is nominally a Christian nation; it is part of the West geographically, historically, culturally. Even Franco would insist, however mistakenly, that Spain's standards are not Russia's. Yet the recent executions were carried out illegally even by current Franco standards. The five men admitted membership in proscribed organizations, but insisted on their innocence. They had a right to be represented and to be fairly tried, but they were convicted virtually unheard and marched off to face a police firing squad. Of the 2.7 million Basques it is generally conceded that there are no neutrals among them; the entire nation is in revolt against the Franco regime.

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But such obvious considerations as these do not get to the root of the matter. From Greece to Norway, Europeans experienced the reality of fascism; this country never did. We fought a war against the Fascist powers but it had a much different significance for us than it did for our European allies. Most European nations were occupied by Fascist forces. Britain was an exception but close enough to the reality never to have forgotten it. And while this country played a most significant role in the ultimate defeat of the Fascist powers, World War II was won by the Russians on the Eastern front, at Stalingrad. Europeans remember the 20 million Russian dead whom we seem to have forgotten. Issues of the kind raised by the Spanish executions cannot be packaged like potatoes; they must be examined separately, each on its merits, in the specific current setting and historical context in which it is raised. To let Washington officials off the hook on the Spanish bases deal by pointing to the fact that the Russians are often equally brutal in their treatment of minorities and dissidents is simply to confuse the issue; it is, in effect, a cop-out. Rafael Alberti, the Spanish poet who has lived in exile in Italy for forty years, is quoted by *Newsweek* as saying: "The reason Spain moves world opinion so much is that it was the first country to fight an anti-Fascist war and it is the last European country to maintain a Fascist regime. This situation lies heavily on the world's conscience." But a qualification must be added: on the European conscience beyond a doubt, but not, apparently, on the American.

What's Good for GM

"General Motors is coming to Poland," a GM executive announced in Warsaw last month, according to Malcolm W. Browne's report in *The New York Times.* While the prospect of a large plant manufacturing half-ton trucks may cause joy in Lublin, the proposed location, auto workers unemployed in Detroit will no doubt have different reactions.

General Motors won't be the first American company to set up shop in Poland—Singer has been making sewing machines there for the last five years, some of them sold in the United States—and other corporations, including Westinghouse, are considering major Polish production facilities. Browne reports that his sources say Poland is an enticing host for American manufacturing because it has the technological capacity to produce high-quality "American" products—and because its labor is paid at a scale low enough to attract foreign industry. Unlike most of the countries where American business has chosen to locate its worker-subsidized plants, Poland has a strong and stable government, Browne's sources say, and an "excellent record of adhering strictly to business agreements."

These qualities, combined with abundant energy and good railroads and ports, may make Poland a multinational executive's dream as an American manufacturing outpost. And a reasonable case can be made that having U.S. corporate plants in Eastern Europe buttresses détente. Yet, besides displacing American industrial jobs, such plants also cost the nation's taxpayers huge sums of money annually. Such jealously guarded loopholes as the foreign tax credit and the provision deferring federal taxes on earnings until they actually are returned here provide the multinationals with rewards for expanding production abroad.

Protectionism is a thorny issue. Trade barriers can boomerang and stifle prudent international industrialization. At the same time, the government has no business subsidizing such moves as GM's into Poland. Export licenses are required when American materials or technology is shipped abroad, but, the *Times* reports, "These licenses are now granted fairly routinely" for all but sophisticated, militarily applicable equipment. The political pitch that the corporations' international maneuvers benefit Americans at home merits debate.

Promise After Compromise

On October 13, the Legal Services Corporation will assume the assets and liabilities of the old OEO Legal Services Program. The transfer comes at the end of four years of bitter legislative wrangling, plus an additional year spent trying to get a board of directors appointed. (See "Making the System Work" by Peter H. Reid, *The Nation*, February 16, 1974.)

The legislation signed by President Nixon on July 25, 1974, establishes in the District of Columbia a nonprofit corporation to be operated by an eleven-person board of directors. The directors are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Funds for the corporation come from Congress and from them the corporation will make grants to local organizations to provide legal service to the poor.

It took Gerald Ford until December to nominate a board, which then contained several opponents of the Legal Service Program. After several months of attacks, counterattacks, resignations and promises to remain to the end, a full board containing few of the original nominees was confirmed by the Senate on July 9. While the board contains several academics, including its chairman, Roger Crampton, Dean of Cornell Law School, it is probably best characterized as representing Middle America. It includes no women, no representatives of the legal service client community and no one who is not a lawyer.

The corporation begins operation with a rather unhappy structure resulting from the four years of legislative compromise. The bill finally signed by Nixon contains several very restrictive measures aimed at hindering aggressive representation of the poor. Attorneys in programs funded by the corporation may not file lawsuits concerning Selective Service issues, school desegregation, or nontherapeutic abortions. In addition, Rep. Edith Green's last-minute floor amendment bars the corporation from funding the Legal Service Backup Centers which have provided much of the coordination and imaginative thinking during the ten years of federal legal assistance.

Despite such an unpromising history, since its first meeting in July the board has pleasantly surprised Legal Service supporters. It has already had several meetings and has quickly set about its business. Perhaps most significant was the unanimous vote to request a budget for fiscal 1976 of $96.4 million, an increase of $25 million over the Legal Service budget for the past several years. (Getting little support from the Office of Management and Budget, the

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appropriation came out of Congress at $88 million.) In addition, committees were quickly established to search for a chief executive officer, to draft regulations and bylaws and to review the status of the backup centers. Such activity is more than welcome, since there has been no leadership in the administration of the program for several years.

Three crucial areas of decision will concern the board in the next year: the level of funding for the corporation; rules and regulations; selection of a president—i.e., the executive officer. Decisions on these issues will determine much of the course of poverty law for some time to come.

Legal Service projects have been financially strangled for years with the federal budget frozen at $71 million. The Bureau of Social Science Research has estimated that a minimum of $470 million is necessary to provide nationwide legal service to the poor. While no such amount will be soon forthcoming, the manner in which the corporation seeks additional funds and how it allocates them should provide considerable insight into the future direction of legal services. Very quickly the corporation must promulgate regulations to amplify and fill out the enabling legislation. Such regulations, because several provisions of the statute are ambiguous, can make available reasonable legal representation for the poor or insure its absence. The kind of staff the corporation selects will have a substantial effect on these decisions and others facing the board. It has been said that a "name" Republican, someone like John Doar, is being sought for president. With more than 200 applications received, it should be possible to select an advocate of a strong Legal Service program.

Perhaps the most hopeful development during the two-month life of the board has been the apparent acceptance by its members, Congress and most concerned spectators, of the ongoing viability of federally assisted legal service for the poor. It appears that critics and supporters alike are no longer debating whether such a program should exist but rather how to provide the best service to the poor.

The Great Natural Gas Rip-Off

A recent decision by the California Public Utilities Commission in the SoCal-ARCO case could well begin a trend in regulation that will saddle consumers everywhere with costs that should be borne by the utility and its investors. Starting this fall, each of the 2 million customers of the Southern California Gas Co. will pay an extra $2.50 a month to help finance the development of natural gas fields in Alaska by SoCal's unregulated business associate, ARCO. What will they get in return? An opportunity to buy and burn the gas for an unspecified price, to be delivered somewhere at an unspecified time in the early 1980s. Only the down payment is certain: $210 per household over a seven-year period.

New light on this incredible case has been shed by San Francisco's Consumer Action, which released a normally secret report by the PUC hearings examiner. His report states: "It is abhorrent to foist this noisome proposal of such huge magnitude upon the rate-paying public."

Not only did the PUC commissioners ignore the verdict of their own examiner, an impartial judge of the whole proceedings, but they totally failed to do any investigating themselves. They did not even consider such important questions as when the gas would start to flow; what it would cost; whether or not the price would be regulated or unregulated; how it would be transported and at what cost. Also, the PUC's conduct of the actual hearings was amateurish to the point of ineptitude.

The SoCal-ARCO case is of profound interest to New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma and other states that are currently facing the same issue—whether to make consumers foot the bill for costs which are and should be the stockholders' responsibility. Many commissions, like that in California, are in danger of panicking at a supposedly severe shortage of gas, and the growing unwillingness of investors to put up front money for exploration.

Are supplies really as low as the gas companies claim? The PUC examiner's report shows how suspect industry figures can be. California already has proven reserves of natural gas equal to the amount covered in the Alaska deal. Nor is there any excuse for stockholders to poor-mouth: ARCO freely admitted it had the ability to raise its own working capital without tapping the public trough.

Faced by this kind of blackmail, the Federal Power Commission should call an immediate halt to such transactions. Alternatively, why not go the whole hog and nationalize the entire energy business? In the words of the PUC examiner: "If the people put up the money to develop energy sources, then the people should own those sources."

Jennifer Cross

The Demise of *Lithopinion*

The fall issue of *Lithopinion*, a quarterly union magazine, would have marked its tenth anniversary. But the magazine succumbed at issue No. 39. Its death ended a unique and noble experiment by Edward Swayduck, president of Local One, Amalgamated Lithographers of America, to lift commerce to a higher level via good writing and aesthetics.

Swayduck has been a progressive influence in the labor movement. He welcomed automation and set up a school to help his lithographers adjust to it. He fought every sign of featherbedding. He established one of the solidest pension funds in the business.

But perhaps his greatest achievement was *Lithopinion*. There was a practical motivation for it: its pages were meant to persuade U.S. businessmen that they didn't have to go to, say, Switzerland, for the finest color printing. *Lithopinion* was also aimed at showing that art lithography could be perfectly blended with public affairs essays. It was probably the only magazine in America where you might find Jasper Johns bumping elbows with William O. Douglas. To achieve *Lithopinion*'s fantastic quality, the union spent an equally fantastic $6 per copy to print it—and gave away about 20,000 copies per issue.

The Medicis would have approved that kind of generous tribute to art, but over time both management and the union's members began to have second thoughts about the subsidy. Swayduck, in ill health, recently retired and his successor announced suspension of the publication—in part, it is said, to stop an internecine squabble in the union over whether it should be continued. But worth noting is

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the fact that the membership was never polled to determine its attitude toward this remarkable publication, which was a tribute to the printing arts and crafts and a lively and interesting publication to boot.

Island of Shame

Details are beginning to emerge about one of the most disturbing, secret Anglo-American foreign-policy maneuvers of the last decade: the eviction of some 1,200 residents from their homes on Diego Garcia, an Indian Ocean island, to make room for an American military base.

The island, under British control for two centuries, was leased to the United States for use in 1966, about the time when the British Government took control of its major industry, copra. Beginning in 1968, evidently on London's orders, copra production was allowed to deteriorate; by 1971 work had ceased. The island's economic infrastructure ruined, the Diego Garcians moved to Mauritius, 1,174 miles away. By early 1972, Robert B. Semple Jr. reported in *The New York Times*, "the island's population consisted almost entirely of American naval personnel."

The fate of the Diego Garcians was largely hidden until early last month, when *The Washington Post* and, a day later, the *Manchester Guardian*, broke the story. Both relied on tough reporting by David B. Ottaway on Mauritius. The inhabitants of the island, he wrote, "were forcibly removed before 1972 to make way for a controversial American naval base there." He found them in Mauritius "living in abject poverty." Following up Ottaway's work, Bernard D. Nossiter wrote in the *Post*, from London, that the British Government admitted that its closing down of Diego Garcia's copra production facilities led to the evacuation, though, he said, the government preferred not to describe its measures as "forced." Britain had paid Mauritius $1.4 million to care for the refugees. But the evacuated islanders told Ottaway that little of the money ever reached them. The U.S. Government, Ottaway reported, said their plight was strictly a matter between Britain and Mauritius.

However, later reports implicated the United States. Simon Winchester of the *Guardian* wrote from Washington that naval sources had said the United States gave Britain a 4-million-pound discount on missiles and missile parts in return for emptying the island of its residents. Winchester quoted Capitol Hill sources as saying the arrangement was "probably not completed at Cabinet level . . . but at senior levels in the two Defense Departments." Sen. Gary Hart (D., Colo.) told the Senate he had details on the transaction but could not release them because of their confidential classification. He asked the Government Accounting Office for an investigation.

Members of both Congress and the British Parliament claim they had no knowledge of a forced exodus from Diego Garcia. Pentagon representatives, when appealing for funds to develop the base, time and again told Congress the islands were uninhabited. Members of Parliament said they had been told that residents of the island were contract laborers who left of their own accord.

Congressional liberals have been questioning expansion of the Diego Garcia base for years, while Pentagon representatives and their supporters have insisted the base was necessary to counter what they claimed was growing Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean. As evidence, they cited intelligence with which the CIA reportedly did not agree.

Sens. John Culver (D., Iowa) and Edward Kennedy (D., Mass.) co-sponsored an amendment to the State Department authorization bill demanding a Presidential report on the Diego Garcia affair by November 1. The amendment demands a history of American involvement in the removal of the islanders and the current status of American efforts to help them. It passed on a voice vote and should be kept intact in the larger bill.

Even more than the American manipulations in Micronesia, the removal of the Diego Garcians from their homeland smacks of an international arrogance that raises profound questions about the nature of Anglo-American foreign policy. The secrecy and deception surrounding the evacuation once again provokes concern about other acts now unknown. The people of Diego Garcia deserve full compensation and, if they wish, return to their homes. The age of colonialism is supposed to be over.

WHO LEADS THE ALLIANCE?

NATO AND THE U.S. IN EUROPE

HERBERT S. LEVINE

Munich

The German magazine *Stern* produced an eye-catching cover for its May 28th issue. The illustration showed a weary, dirty American G.I. squatting on a map of Germany with his automatic weapon resting on top of a rumpled American flag, a PX matchbook stuck in the band of his helmet, and a thoroughly woebegone expression on his face. The caption pointed out that the American presence in Germany (some 190,000 soldiers) costs the Federal Republic well over $1 billion a year (U.S. sources would dispute the figure) and asked pointedly, "Are the Americans still dependable?" The sad sack on the cover certainly didn't *look* dependable.

The *Stern* cover neatly caught and exploited a prevailing mood in Western Europe and particularly in Germany, where most of our troops are stationed. Of course, most of

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the problems involved in the American commitment to European defense through NATO have been around for years: the suspicion with which the Americans are regarded by the European Left, the worry about dollar drain and the continual squabbles over sharing the cost of maintaining American troops, the realistic questions about the ability of Americans to function effectively in the event of an actual Russian military attack on Western Europe, the apparently decreasing likelihood of such an attack and the difficulty Europeans have had in getting along with their sometimes turbulent uniformed American guests. Three new problems have been added more recently: the Greek-Turkish dispute, the leftward swing in Portugal with the potential for political change in Italy, and the American defeat in Indochina.

At present, the Portuguese situation has everyone confused. It is impossible to predict what the future political course of that NATO member will be, even if an actual Communist takeover has been averted. The developments in Portugal point up a weakness in NATO that had been overlooked since the political stabilization of Europe in the early 1950s. That is, a major American presence in Western Europe, backing up large and well-trained and -equipped European armies, was no guarantee against internal political change. Indeed, no factor has been more instrumental in promoting political change in Portugal than the military itself, long a part of the NATO alliance. As for Italy, recent major Communist victories in local elections have suggested to some more conservative observers the possibility of a Communist takeover in the near future. Ironically, the aggressiveness of the Communist Party in Portugal weakened the party's attempts to enter a coalition national government in Italy. But the disastrous state of the Italian economy makes a "national unity" government of all parties a distinct possibility. Such a government, with any Communist participation at all, is enough to give NATO's supporters nightmares.

And just as an apparently close military alliance with the United States could not prevent political change within NATO members, and may not be able to do so in the future, so it could not prevent major quarrels among NATO members. The continuance of the Greek-Turkish dispute has been directly damaging to American prestige here. Although we have been adopting an official hands-off policy in Portugal, we have been very much involved in the Cyprus problem and our inability to make peace between our two allies has been much noted. Even more embarrassing has been the Turkish reaction to the Congressional arms embargo, which led to the spectacle of American soldiers being pushed around in a manner any military man would find humiliating.

Crucial in determining the attitude of Europeans toward the American military alliance have been the nationalist successes in Indochina. Interpretations of the American withdrawal in Asia have varied. To the Marxist European Left, it was the inevitable result of the uprising of progressive forces against imperialist repression; to the far Right, it was a clear case of American treachery toward its friends for the sake of the delusory policy of détente. The right-wing (some would say "neo-Nazi") German *National-Zeitung* noted Ford's (*sic*) betrayal of Vietnam and Cambodia and suggested that Germany's turn would come sooner or later. The spectrum of opinion between these two ideologically determined extremes has registered every possible variation of bewilderment, but one prevailing attitude is unmistakable: the debacle in Asia, coupled with the post-Watergate political climate and the American economic depression as they are interpreted in the European news media, have produced a deep sense of wariness as to the intentions and capabilities of the United States. Thus the traditional problems of NATO appear now in a new light. Europeans in larger numbers than ever before are asking themselves and their governments if the American presence in Europe is worth the cost and trouble. The Left, of course, has long campaigned against NATO and America's part in it, and this position has not been changed by recent events. Far more significant is the new attitude toward America now current at the Center and right of Center, and in the government and business establishments of our long-time military allies.

It used to be fashionable in America to refer to the President as the "leader of the free world," and there was a reality behind the cliché. The crisis in confidence that shook the American Presidency under Johnson had almost no effect in Europe, although it may have influenced the political behavior of a segment of the younger generation. Our European allies may occasionally have been embarrassed by left-wing criticism of their connection with the American involvement in Vietnam (that was particularly plain in Britain), but these same governments showed by the policies they followed that they approved of our actions in Asia, or were at least willing to extend their benign tolerance. Even the French, fishing in troubled waters, were not really rejecting American policy—they were only seeking some advantage from our entanglements.

If Vietnam was no disadvantage to Johnson in his relations with Europe, the same and more was true of Nixon, who enjoyed a remarkable degree of support and sympathy, particularly in Britain and Germany. Given American political developments since 1972, we may find Europe's sympathy for Nixon difficult to understand, but it is nonetheless a fact, at least among those European groups that have been traditionally pro-American. McGovern's suggestions during the 1972 election campaign that American troop rosters ought to be reduced in Europe was very badly received in the European establishment and raised Nixon's stock to great heights. Europeans never really understood Watergate and do not to this day. Nixon's attempt to project himself as a master of foreign affairs was more successful here than in his own country. To those Europeans who approved of Nixon's policies as they understood them, American rejection of a great statesman because of a minor incident of political spying seemed an act of incredible political frivolity—in itself proof of American instability and unreliability. Many pinned their hopes on the notion that Henry Kissinger would be able to carry on after Nixon. Ignorance of the American Constitution and the political situation even led to a widespread, if short-lived, belief that Kissinger himself might somehow become President.

This sort of absurdity was only a reflection of the European habit of looking to Washington for "leadership," a

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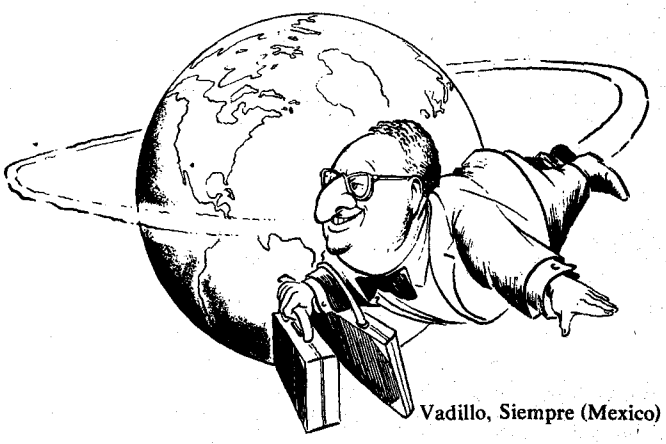
habit that not even de Gaulle could break. But what de Gaulle could not do, Gerald Ford seems to have accomplished. Ford's reaffirmation of NATO unity at Brussels last spring was a farce, given the current situation within that body, and it was treated accordingly by the press, which turned positively cruel when Ford started tripping his way through Salzburg. Some newspapers even reported, with sarcastic headlines, that Ford did *not* trip when he visited Rome after the Salzburg meeting with Sadat. The lackluster performance of the American economy and Ford's ongoing feud with the Congress are interpreted as signs that he is the "weakest American President in recent times." The intricacies of American veto politics are not understood here since they are quite foreign to all European notions of government.

If the Americans could not stop communism in Asia, and now cannot govern their own country effectively or solve their own unemployment problem, what can they do? What do Europeans expect them to do? That is a difficult question. Frantic attempts to demonstrate that we still have what it takes are not working. The *Mayagüez* was a poor trade for Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam. As for Secretary of Defense Schlesinger's suggestions that the United States might use nuclear weapons first in defense of South Korea, it is hard to imagine anything less calculated to increase European confidence in American reliability. Schlesinger's remarks simply horrified most of his European audience. The impression given was that of a defeated and humiliated America ready to drag itself and its allies down to nuclear ruin just to prove it could still fight back. Now that the Indochinese dominoes have fallen, the fate of South Korea is regarded here with supreme



Vadillo, Siempre (Mexico)

indifference despite Seoul's previously close relations with Bonn and other European capitals. Ford administration tough talk on foreign affairs means little here now at best, and at worst only conjures up the image of the trigger-happy American cowboy that is never far from European minds.

Last June Kissinger suggested petulantly that the Europeans were doing America no favor by remaining its friends and could cease to do so if they were not satisfied. This was treated as yet another emotional outburst by the Secretary of State. Kissinger's reputation here still suffers from the reaction of his worshipers to the shocking discovery that he is a fallible human being rather than a fashionable and always victorious demigod. Kissinger's apparent success in bringing off another partial Egyptian-Israeli agreement has been greeted with remarkable skepticism, most unlike the adulation that once favored his every minor pronouncement. Particularly ominous to Western Europeans was the obvious dissatisfaction of the Soviet Union with the Egyptian-Israeli agreement. European conservatives who would once have cheered loudly at the prospect of Soviet exclusion from the Middle East are plainly worried that America has neither the muscle nor the skill to do the job, and may in the process of trying merely hasten the crisis that continually threatens European oil supplies.

The economic, military and political leadership that used to be provided by Washington to the Western European leadership no longer exists, although America is regarded as still powerful enough to do a lot of damage by thrashing about like a panicky brontosaurus. Conciliatory remarks by Helmut Schmidt and others to the effect that America is still vital to Europe are perhaps intended, at least in part, to prevent Washington from doing anything rash in a sudden fit of annoyance at the ingratitude of its partners. And there is another reason for the tactfulness of European leaders in handling the matter of declining American influence—there is no agreement on how and to what ends it is to be replaced.

The European security conference held in Helsinki at the end of July gave clear enough evidence of uncertainty. Détente in Europe seems real and the American initiatives in this area have been at least matched by West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, as they were in some respects preceded by the policies of Charles de Gaulle. But despite the realities of decreasing tension, it proved remarkably difficult for the thirty-five nations planning to attend at Helsinki to put together a conference schedule that was sufficiently foolproof to allow for the summit meeting. Even two weeks before the date of the conference it was not certain whether or not it could be held at all. As it is, the "Final Act" of the Helsinki "Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe" promises to be about as significant in the history of international relations as the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the post-World War I agreement that permanently outlawed warfare as a means of settling international differences. There has been no agreement on the meaning of the actual words of the "Final Act," or even on whether it is binding in international law.

One explanation for the aimlessness of the whole Helsinki show was the sudden loss of confidence that the United States would always be on hand when needed. The original notion of those in the West who were planning for the security and cooperation conference was to give Brezhnev a desired public reconciliation of East and West, with the appropriate guarantee of borders and promises of good behavior all around—a kind of substitute for the peace conference never held after World War II, ratifying all the international decisions made in Europe since 1945, especially by the Soviet Union. In return, some concessions from the Soviet bloc on trade and human rights might be expected. The détente policies of France, West Germany and the United States would also be ratified. All this could be done at little cost, since it was assumed that, despite

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détente, the Western Europeans could negotiate from American strength. But the crash in Asia rather changed what a former American President would have called "the scenario."

The "fall" of Indochina was not the only evidence of American weakness, but it was the most important sign that our troubles were affecting our ability to act abroad in ways that allied governments would have wished. To be sure, Bonn, London and the lesser NATO capitals were by this time glad the Asian adventure was over and would have been happier yet if it had ended sooner. But the spectacle of overwhelming and sudden defeat accompanied by apparent American paralysis was shocking to Nixon's old European supporters. By unhappy coincidence the events in Indochina were magnified here by the surge of Communist strength in Portugal and the remarkable Communist victories in the Italian local elections. The Western position at the end of July and the beginning of August no longer appeared as strong as it had only a few months before. The security conference, intended as a more or less meaningless European reconciliation, took on a much less pleasant aspect.

The economic situation has been a contributing factor. Soviet economic prognosticators have been burned before this by predicting that every little crisis was the beginning of the end of capitalism. They have learned caution. But in the West a surprising number of good capitalists, those who have always been most enthusiastic about the American presence in Europe, are ready to admit that their system is finished, or close to it. For countries in acute economic crisis the American defeat in Asia coincided with a loss of faith in the ability of the Western economy to survive the current depression. Even the British with their vaunted constitutional traditions have reason to wonder how long their system can withstand a 25 per cent rate of inflation. Particularly interesting is the panic evident among the well-to-do and the middle-class Thatcher constituency. Many British businessmen seem to believe that the battle of Britain is already lost and Socialist Britain already a reality. As evidence, they cite the "fact" that the Labour government and the trade unions are trying to exploit inflation as a device for social leveling.

In Germany, where economic problems are far less severe, the political fears engendered by the loss of American leadership are more obvious in a purer form. Doubts about the wisdom of *Ostpolitik* and the sincerity of the other side are magnified by the loss of confidence in American support. The entire basis of Brandt's détente policy was faith in the reality of the American guarantee of West German security. But though Helmut Schmidt has probably a better claim than any other man to the "leadership" of Western Europe, he has yet to take his "followers" in any particular direction. The same may be said of Giscard d'Estaing. Neither man has much to offer in foreign policy to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of American influence.

Under the circumstances, the security conference began to look, in the eyes of the Western European Establishment, like a surrender to the Soviet Union, however much Brezhnev tried to avoid any such impression. "Finlandization" was a term often used, and it was suggested by more than the summit's location in Helsinki. Little wonder that the preliminary discussions were so hesitant, the final arrangements so difficult and the disputes about the meaning of the ultimate agreement so basic. But even as the Western European leadership argues with the Soviets about the meaning of the Helsinki accord, it discounts the Kissinger achievement in the Middle East on the ground that the Soviets do not approve: politicians of all camps, particularly conservatives, have shown a marked desire to shake the hand of a Communist leader in Moscow or Peking.

Ironically, the new skepticism about the value of the American military here has coincided with a very real increase in the efficiency and military capability of the American forces at hand. Thanks to the all-volunteer Army, pushed along by unemployment at home, the soldiers of the Seventh Army are far better educated than they were only four years ago. The military crime rate has dropped in most areas to levels at or below the general local crime rate. Drugs and alcohol plague the Army here as at home, but the acute crisis seems to have passed. Violent incidents between American soldiers and local citizens have declined. And the grades earned by American units on joint exercises with European forces have risen steadily. Our soldiers continue to do their job as well as, if not better than, their European counterparts. But in the larger sense, they have no way of knowing what their job is, since neither their own government nor their hosts can tell them.

The confusion here in Europe with regard to the American alliance suggests that it is time for Congressional leaders to take the initiative in defining the nature of our relationship with other NATO countries. The American presence here was advocated by European forces that are now no longer particularly interested in having us actively involved in their affairs, because they have grown skeptical of our ability to help. The traditional justifications for the American presence were associated with the policies of a discredited American President and his interventionist predecessors, policies that have already cost far more than any gain could justify. The European Right and Center have lost their faith in America, while the Left retains its suspicions. By this time it is plain that the Ford administration can only stumble from one foreign policy crisis to the next, rather as it handles the American economy. It is up to the appropriate committees of Congress to find some justification for the continued presence of our soldiers in Europe. If no such justification can be found, and one does not seem likely, then it is probably time to bring the troops home, and to readjust our relations with Western Europe on a realistic basis, with an eye to the facts of our new status in the world. □

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Jimmy, Fitz and the Money Machine

PATRICK OWENS

In 1973, Frank Fitzsimmons, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, negotiated a Fourth of July present for his members: a thirty-three-month contract with the country's over-the-road trucking firms. The contract was quite modest, considering the power of the Teamsters in the fragmented industry, but Richard Nixon had become a friend of Fitz and he was asking unions to hold down their demands in the interest of stalling the inflation. Fitz also has friends who find it convenient to borrow from the billion-dollar-plus Central States Southeast and Southwest Areas Pension Fund, and the contract provided a generous infusion of money for them to tap.

The over-the-road drivers are the aristocrats of working Teamsters, and their contract has been the union's proudest showpiece, but this time the package was calculated to cost the employers an additional 7 per cent a year, an almost invisible gain for the members, given the pace of inflation. At the same time, pension fund contributions were increased $3 a week the first year, $2.50 the second and another $2.50 the third.

These increases averaged 15 per cent or more of previous contribution levels. They suggested one of two things: either a lot more money was needed to pay pensions, even though these are as hard for members to get as tamales in Nova Scotia, or Fitz wanted more money to finance high-risk loans to favored clients of the fund. The first explanation is probably accurate: such evidence as was available of the fund's workings indicated something of a cash drought. But in either case the result was the same: the big beneficiaries of the increases would be the same kind of people—and often the same people—as the ones who had lived high off the fund in the past. Many of these borrowers had criminal records; more often than not they were poor credit risks who would have had trouble financing a car at Beneficial. "Another Dorfman contract," one Teamster observer commented retrospectively the other day. Dorfman is Allen Dorfman, a long-time sidekick of James R. Hoffa who accomplished an apparently effortless transfer of allegiance to Fitzsimmons when Hoffa went to prison and Fitz, Hoffa's choice as union caretaker, became acting president of the union in March of 1967.

I almost forgot that Fitzsimmons gave himself a present in the contract, too: its thirty-three-month term meant that it would expire in time for a new agreement to be negotiated in advance of the 1976 Teamsters convention, where Fitz was expected to be a candidate for re-election. But this job security provision was almost certain to be a minor consideration. Even the worst presidents of international unions are virtually impervious to attack from within the union. Fitz was—and is—one of the worst. But only Hoffa himself, who was out of prison and trying to get his presidency back, could stop Fitz. If Hoffa succeeded in getting rid of the freeze-out clause in the commutation of his sentence, which barred him from union office until all thirteen years of his two federal sentences were up—that is, until March of 1980—it was most unlikely that the 1976 Teamsters election would turn on anything so routine as a new over-the-road contract.

These sentences were for the crimes of (*1*) trying to fix a jury that tried him on charges of taking large kickbacks from employers in the Test Fleet case; and (*2*) directly defrauding his members through a bogus Florida retirement development. Hoffa secretly owned 45 per cent of the stock in the development, where some of the lots were under water. By any rational criterion, no man with two convictions for such offenses on his record should be permitted to hold union office, but Hoffa was the beneficiary of legislative jockeying when the Landrum-Griffin Act was passed by Congress in 1959. The law barred some former felons from union office, including those convicted of rape and robbery. But it did not exclude those convicted of fixing juries, taking money from employers or defrauding their own membership.

Fitzsimmons took full credit for getting Hoffa out of jail. He had pushed the case in the Nixon White House and had also remained loyal to Nixon when other labor leaders were denouncing his big-business economic policies and (in many cases) opposing his re-election. But Fitz denied any knowledge of, or complicity in, the freeze-out clause. As is often the case when trying to understand what goes on in the Teamsters, the freeze-out raises separate issues of action and intention: given Hoffa's offenses, any president would seem well advised to keep him out of union office. But given Fitzsimmon's relationship with Nixon, and Nixon's performance generally, his motives can hardly be assumed to be simon-pure. Fitz is at best a hack, a coarse bumbler who was picked by Hoffa as successor precisely because he seemed to lack any capacity to run his own show. He had been a third- and fourth-level union operative in Detroit until a few years before his selection, in 1966, to be general vice president of the union. He could hardly manage a public speech and his personal ineptitude swiftly became legendary. (Early in 1967, for one example, five television cameras were positioned in front of the ballroom door of a hotel in Hollywood-by-the-Sea, Fla., waiting for the end of the last meeting of the Teamsters executive board over which Hoffa would preside. The door opened and Teamster vice presidents and lesser fry swarmed out. "Here comes Fitz," somebody shouted. The camera focused on an unprepossessing man wearing horn-rimmed glasses and a tight semi-scowl. Bob Maher, an old Fitzsimmons acquaintance and a television reporter, put a hand out and said, "Hey, Fitz." Fitz said, as the cameras ground: "I'll talk to you later, Bob. Right now I have to piss.")

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Hoffa was convicted of crimes that involved betraying his obligations to the membership, but he is also one of the most gifted labor leaders the country has seen. Both the national trucking agreement and the Central States pension fund were his inventions. It is Hoffa's tragedy, and that of working people, that these difficult innovations have never achieved anything like their potentials because Hoffa was never free fully to utilize the agreement or inclined to go much beyond plunder of the pension fund.

Trucking is vital to the American economy. Few manufacturers and almost no retail businesses can function without it. Hoffa's control of the over-the-road truckers—who had previously been organized through regional groupings dominated by baronial Teamster chieftains—made him the first labor leader with the power to shut down the country. He actually would never have had to use that power in order to secure tremendous gains for Teamsters and for unionized workers generally, but he was never in a position even to consider using it in fact or as a threat because he was personally so vulnerable to action by the criminal justice section of the Department of Justice. The government might have descended on the union and torn it apart. (Hoffa and some of his lieutenants did think about calling all the truckers off the road in the spring of 1967, in a last-ditch attempt to keep him out of jail. But the notion was swiftly rejected; Hoffa was easily intelligent enough to appreciate that such a selfish use of such a formidable weapon would be counterproductive.)

The pension fund could provide secure retirement for all workers in the trucking industry and in the multitudinous other fields, from a salt mine to assorted police departments, where Teamsters labor. But Hoffa chose, at least as a first priority, to use the money to finance strange business propositions advanced by his friends, and friends of his friends.

You don't have to be much of a visionary to appreciate the implications for unionism in the national contract and the pension fund. The Teamster image has proved sufficient in recent years, despite a less than shining record at bargaining and representation, to keep people coming into the union, often with little organizing effort. A national retirement system, in which pension credits would accumulate despite job changes, was within Hoffa's grasp. That would have been an unbeatable organizing tool and a powerful incentive for smaller unions to merge into the Teamsters. Control of over-the-road truckers could, similarly, have given labor a clout in the country's economic affairs that most labor leaders have never even dreamed of. In terms of representing working people, Hoffa was the first man who could have put it all together; conceivably, a successor still could.

But Hoffa, having built the machinery, turned it to his own perverse uses. Instead of creating true pension portability, he built a series of limitations into the pension fund that kept many who had contributed heavily from receiving any pension at all. Two of the most important of these, as *The Wall Street Journal* has documented, involve individual record keeping and continuity of service.

The fund itself does not maintain contribution records. When applying for a pension, the 450,000 employees covered by the Central States fund must prove that they worked for employers covered by the fund and, often, that the employer made the contributions to the fund stipulated by the agreement. Truckdrivers change jobs often and are not bookkeepers at heart. Many have been denied pensions, or have not bothered to apply for them, because of this provision.

Even those who do have records are often excluded because of the continuity of service provision. It says that anyone who has not contributed to the fund for three years forfeits his pension rights. The job-changing habits of truckers and warehouse workers frequently take them outside trucking and warehousing, often involuntarily. And even those who stay inside may discover that, unwittingly, they have spent three years in the jurisdiction of a local union not covered by the plan. They too forfeit their pensions. The number of workers who have qualified for pensions and are receiving them is not publicly known.

Instead of paying pensions and using the performance record to make the Teamsters even bigger, more powerful and more useful to workers, Hoffa manipulated Central States as a vehicle for financing the speculations of dubious borrowers. If trial testimony is to be believed, he enriched himself in the process.

When he was U.S. Attorney in Manhattan, Robert Morgenthau, Jr. pursued Teamster pension fund cases with uncommon enthusiasm. According to Herbert Itkin, an undercover agent, roughly 10 per cent of a series of loans was kicked back to David Wenger, the fund's accountant. Wenger told of passing kickback money on to mobsters, having retained a share which he split with Hoffa.

Dorfman, Hoffa's man in the fund, is the son of an old Hoffa crony who ran a racket-ridden trash haulers' local in Chicago. He put Dorfman in as the fund's insurance agent, but Hoffa, whose control of detail is legendary, made the consequential decisions himself. When Hoffa went to jail he took his union offices with him, including the presidency and the top jobs in the Detroit and Midwest Teamsters conferences. He made arrangements to send instructions to Fitzsimmons, Dorfman and his other agents through his lawyers and other prison visitors, including his foster son, Charles L. O'Brien. One of the lawyers, William Bufalino, moved from Detroit to Pennsylvania to be near the federal prison at Lewisburg where Hoffa was jailed.

But these arrangements fell through immediately, as I learned for the first time last summer when I investigated Hoffa's disappearance. To Hoffa's wounded astonishment, Fitz told the earliest emissaries that he didn't want to hear a word from his old boss. Dorfman proved equally unwilling to listen. He became Fitz's man on the pension fund, but with the difference that Fitz had less grasp of what was going on and less involvement in individual decisions. The fund, a scandal under Hoffa, became even more of a plunderbund for shady characters. Fitzsimmons did name William Presser, an Ohio Teamsters chieftain, to represent his and the union's interests on the fund. So far as was known, Dorfman and Presser did most of the money lending.

(This arrangement was an excellent example of Fitz's approach to the union. Where Hoffa had run it single-handedly, involving himself even in personnel decisions in

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local unions distant from his home turf in Detroit, Fitzsimmons acquiesced in a return to the old, feudal style, parceling out the powers Hoffa had carefully acquired. One result was that the regional Teamsters leaders were united behind Fitz against Hoffa's comeback. Hoffa would have had on his side much of the rank and file, which still idolizes him, and many local union leaders. Fitz would have had the international union's entire power structure, with the exception of the St. Louis boss Harold Gibbons. But Hoffa needed first of all to get the freeze-out provision of his commutation voided. He was suing for this in court, while doing a lot of politicking with local unions around the country, until he disappeared on July 30.)

The Dorfman-Presser (or Presser-Dorfman; no outsider knows the balance of power) management of the fund was severely shaken by agents of the law. Dorfman was convicted in 1972 of accepting a $55,000 kickback on a $1 million loan in what appears to be a fairly typical pension fund transaction.

The $1 million went to Neisco, Inc., on June 30, 1967, three months after Hoffa was jailed. Neisco had been created by one George Horvath just to receive the loan. Horvath also borrowed $4.4 million in 1963, $3.4 million in three separate loans in 1964 and $5.8 million in March of last year, each loan being made to a different corporation. All were gravely delinquent when the $1.5 million was loaned.

Dorfman was sentenced to a year in jail and served a few months. Presser was convicted early this year of misusing $590,000 in union funds. He, too, left the fund to serve a suspended sentence. But Fitzsimmons is a family man. He named Presser's son, Jackie, to stand in for the convicted father. Dorfman still hovers around the fund, the extent of his influence being unknown. Nor does anyone who is talking know whether the elder Presser is making the big decisions through his son.

Beyond the information that has emerged from criminal proceedings, most of what is now known about the fund is a result of digging by Jim Drinkhall, investigative editor of *Overdrive*, a Los Angeles-based, distinctly nonslick magazine that has achieved a circulation of 55,000, much of it at truck stops, by writing for truck-drivers and challenging their union. (See "The Independent Truckers: Organizing the 'Gypsies' " by Harry Maurer, *The Nation*, January 11.) In 1972, Drinkhall secured records in a court case filed against the pension fund. Every month since then he has printed an analysis of one fund shenanigan or another. Last July, shortly before Hoffa's disappearance, *The Wall Street Journal* used Drinkhall's material, its own research and a group of accountants to publish the most comprehensive and expert analysis so far available.

Vast amounts of fund money have gone to organized crime figures for casinos in Nevada and various resort enterprises in California and Florida. Money also has been loaned to various Teamster employers, including Bally Manufacturing Co., which makes pinball machines. Recent Bally stockholders, according to the *Journal*, have included Fitzsimmons and Presser.

In all the New York prosecutions that Morgenthau initiated, kickback money was traced by Itkin's testimony

Oliphant, Washington Star

"Muggings, Bashings, Plots, Disappearances, Kidnappings. . . . What Are We—the CIA?"

to underworld types including Johnny Dioguardi's uncle and brother, and Salvadore Granello. The pension fund has invested more than $45 million in Rancho La Costa in Southern California. Returns have been thin but the Frank E. Fitzsimmons invitational golf tournament is played there each fall.

Loans that have gone sour—and a great many have—are almost always bolstered by further loans or by loans to insiders to acquire the failing property. Defaults on such second-time-around investments are routine.

The *Journal*'s accountants found that the fund had invested heavily in high-risk enterprises like resorts, motels and bowling alleys. With most of its assets in real estate, and most of the real estate investments speculative or worse, the fund has been a poor earner and in a vulnerable position. As of last January 31, it reported assets of $1.34 billion. But much of this figure—no outsider could say just how much—was in loans already defaulted or otherwise unlikely to be repaid. The fund is apparently paying out less than half of its income in pensions.

A federal pension law passed last fall will somewhat change the situation of Central States. It will presumably require more public reporting and the vesting of pensions (vesting is the setting aside of the money needed to pay an individual pension, so that there can be no doubt the pension will be paid at retirement time). But the degree of public disclosure will depend on detailed regulations still being written in Gerald Ford's employer-inclined administration (neither labor nor management is enthusiastic about pension fund reporting). Central States will, if it likes, be able to delay vesting until a worker has ten years of contributions to his credit. And vesting requires only the setting aside of assets; it does not necessarily preclude their investment in glorified hot-dog stands and money-losing motels owned by hoodlums.

Meanwhile, Fitzsimmons seems solidly entrenched

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in the union. Hoffa's disappearance has apparently removed the last real threat to his undisputed (if shared) control. Local 299, his and Hoffa's 18,000-member home local in Detroit, was the focus of the Fitzsimmons-Hoffa struggle until Hoffa vanished. Last winter, Dave Johnson, a Hoffa loyalist, had faced down Richard Fitzsimmons, Fitz's son, for the union's presidency. (Young Fitz remained vice president in a face-saving compromise.) Now Johnson is saying that he has always been able to work with Fitz, and Hoffa's singular insurgency has faded. (Hoffa himself announced that he'd seek the 299 presidency as a first step on the road back, but he dropped the idea when his lawyers confirmed that he'd almost certainly go back to jail if he defied the freeze-out.)

Hoffa, before he vanished, had emerged as the most improbable sort of reform candidate, with generally powerless reform agitators in Detroit and other locals sometimes making common cause with him. The way of the insurgent is hard in almost any union, including such theoretical seats of democracy as the United Automobile Workers.

In Detroit, even more blatantly than elsewhere, critics of Hoffa and more recently of Fitzsimmons have been summarily thrashed, hounded on the job and otherwise effectively discouraged. Harold Gibbons, himself a singular combination of old-line union man and radical visionary, has been stripped of his power outside St. Louis because of his alignment with Hoffa. He is saying now that the game is up for Fitz's opponents.

Theories about Hoffa's disappearance are grounds for marvelous speculation but, with one exception, they have little relevance to the union's future. That exception—and it cannot be utterly discounted, though it must be considered improbable—is the notion that Hoffa engineered his own abduction and will choose the magic moment when a reappearance would confound his enemies, restore his right to hold union office, and generally create what one cynic has dubbed a Teamster Easter. Otherwise, the identity of Hoffa's presumed assassins seems to matter little to the union. Whether they were Teamsters or mobsters or some much more improbable agents of malevolence (my favorite imagined villains are a coterie of graying truckers aggrieved because they've been done out of their pensions), the union will continue its recreant course, a source of immense profit for the chosen and of minimal benefit to the workers who pay its bills.

Even Fitzsimmons's departure from the scene could not change things materially. His heir apparent (and present brain trust) is Murray (Dusty) Miller, the vastly shrewder but not visibly more visionary or dedicated head of the Teamsters in the South. When even so imperfect a reformer as Gibbons finds it impossible to sustain himself beyond his hometown, no conceivable line of succession is going to free the Teamsters from their past and present.

You don't have to be a radical believer in conspiracy theories—and, on the record, I am not one—to see in all this large advantages to capitalists who are generally considered more reputable than Allen Dorfman or Johnny Dioguardi's uncle. As long as the Teamsters remain a plaything of shakedown artists, business unionists and bunglers, and as long as Teamsters pension funds remain a pool of soft credit for hard and shady characters, the giant of American unionism—the theoretical cutting edge of organized labor—will fail of its potential and Teamsters and other workers will keep on getting screwed. □

THIRD-PARTY PHOENIX

THE LIBERTY UNION OF VERMONT

JONATHAN EVAN MASLOW

The scene recalled an old left-wing summer camp: there sat the radicals on folding chairs, drenched in perspiration, drowning in ideological argument, fuming in a wood-frame meeting hall by a quiet rural lake. Their endless debate could also have been a relic, except that the people meeting here were members of Vermont's third political party, the Liberty Union. What makes them interesting today is that they are suddenly, if still modestly, successful. Their statewide candidates can now command enough votes to deny Vermont politicians a majority at the polls. The party's referendum campaign to socialize the state's electric utilities passed wherever it was put to vote. The *status quo* parties must take the Left's challenge seriously for the first time since *fin de siècle* socialism flashed through the Green Mountain State. And decades ahead of schedule—in a state decades behind the times—Vermont's Liberty Union already boldly discusses the ultimate question of politics: the question of power.

For two days and nights over a summer weekend the party organizers secluded themselves to reflect on where they had come from, to decide where they are headed. No one offered easy formulae at this, the L.U.'s fifth annual convention, but everyone present agreed that the party's 1974 gains in electoral position were due to its involvement in normally "nonelectoral" issues. They recalled that the party had, in its first year, tapped a mere protest vote against the war in Vietnam, 2 per cent statewide in 1970 and dropping to barely 2,000 votes when L.U. denounced McGovern as reformist. Then the Vermont construction workers went on strike and the party organized demonstrations in their support. Although the state's contractors broke the strike and the unions, in pitiful consort with a labor-supported Democratic state administration, a lasting political alliance had been formed between workers and the young Left party. One of the union leaders, agent Arthur Deloy of Laborers Local 522, became the Liberty

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Union candidate for lieutenant governor in 1974 even though he was effectively excommunicated from the Vermont AFL-CIO.

From the ashes of the strike the Liberty Union rose like the phoenix. The result by Election Day, 1974, was the image of a competent and inspired, though as yet untempered, political movement, winning near pluralities in Vermont's working-class wards and college towns. As a whole, the Liberty Union won just under 7 per cent of the state vote, giving it "major-party" status under Vermont election laws for the first time. Its top individual vote winner was former University of Vermont political scientist Michael Parenti, who scored 9,961 or just above 7 per cent in the Congressional contest, a remarkable figure in view of the fact that his name had been blackened in Vermont by a witch hunt against leftists in the state university. More significant than the percentages, however, were two factors. First, that in the heavily blue-collar districts of Chittendon, Windsor and Bennington Counties, the L.U. had rivaled the Democrats and Republicans with, in some cases, totals above 25 per cent. And second, that in four state races—lieutenant governor, attorney general, state treasurer and auditor of accounts—Liberty Union candidates denied majorities to the other candidates. All four races were thrown into the state legislature, where the plurality winners were confirmed. State election officials estimated that more than 10,000 Vermonters, in a voting population of 140,000, cast one or more ballots for the Left. The pundits have begun to whisper.

In 1975, L.U. went on the offensive in a referendum campaign against Vermont electric utilities. With no statewide vote in a political off-year, the party put its energies into the traditional town-meeting structure. In six towns, L.U. proposed to roll back utility rates, thereby forcing the state's private power monopolies into bankruptcy, to be followed by state takeover and decentralization into public cooperatives. The local nature of the town meeting allowed an intensive political education campaign. The *Rutland Herald*, the state's paper of record, called it "a consumer revolution." Winooski, the grayest belt of industrial Burlington, where white ethnic workers have always sold their souls to the Democrats, passed a resolution for public takeover of the Green Mountain Power Co. by 68 per cent. Rutland, the state's commercial hub, approved a similar resolution by 67 per cent. The L.U. won all along the spine of the Green Mountains: Hinesburg gave it 57 per cent; Middlebury, 71 per cent; Bennington, 72 per cent. And in Shaftsbury, 82 per cent voted to confiscate the electric company. Journalists who called on corporate officers found them reticent. "We've got a lot to consider," said Central Vermont Public Service Corp.'s public relations director, Thomas Hurcomb. "We, at this point in time, have no comment on the votes."

But there was an additional shock to those who had previously ignored Liberty Union as a political gadfly. It came in Burlington, which elects its mayor at town meeting and where, in a three-way race that included the Democratic incumbent, Gordon Paquette, Burlington voters gave 28 per cent to the third-party candidate, 27-year-old Darcy Troville.

For the Liberty Union, the construction workers' strike and the utility campaign have been the classroom of action, the search for a political identity. Perhaps L.U.'s party chairman and 1974 Senatorial candidate Bernard Sanders expressed it best at the summer convention. "We have an idea now of what this party is about," Sanders said. "It's about the 80 per cent disenfranchised people in this state who voted our referendum to confiscate the banks that own the utilities. It's about how close we came to winning the mayoralty race in Burlington. And what it's about more than anything else is how a Left party is getting the respect of Vermont working-class people by acting on the issues that concern them directly."

Not surprisingly, Liberty Union's rise parallels Vermont's worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The national slump has flushed from hiding the historical failure of the state's small-town, agricultural economy. Once known as "The Breadbasket of New England," Vermont has suffered drastic declines in farm production and employment. In 1901, 33,000 farmers tilled 81 per cent of the land; by 1969—when the overall population had more than doubled—only 6,000 farmers remained, working 33 per cent of the land and earning only 4 per cent of state personal income. Until the current crisis, the large, mechanized dairy farms that supply Boston with milk weathered hard times well. Now they, too, are coming to the auction block, as dairymen are caught in the grain and oil inflation.

Migration from the rural localities and degeneration of the small-town life so dependent on agricultural commerce have been followed by a bumpy, unplanned industrialization. A significant marginal population has been created. Unemployment currently hovers around 10 per cent, according to official measurement, but chronic pockets are far above that percentage, and there is a serious underemployment problem as well. While corporate capital has moved into major industries like pulp, printing and machine tooling, on commanding terms, trade unions have actually lost ground and now represent only 16 per cent of the Vermont work force. The state is forty-second nationally in per capita income, and income distribution, according to L.U. researcher John Franco, "is as bad in Vermont as it is in India, Bolivia and Brazil." Indeed, the story sounds so familiar that the Liberty Union compares the exploitation of Vermont to imperialism in the Third World, much to the annoyance of the state's professional politicians. In many ways, and notwithstanding the state's great natural beauty and tradition of yeoman individualism, Vermont is the northernmost banana republic. The quaint culture and charming scenery is set against locked brick factories, rotting farmhouses, forgotten company towns.

The state itself has responded slowly to the economic crisis, delving into Keynesian policy by subsidizing private investment in winter skiing, summer tourism and, more recently, by luring corporations out of the cities with insured loans, tax breaks and promises of a docile work force. Hope springs eternal that spin-off employment in the service sectors will stabilize the economy. Nevertheless, this *turista* policy has set off a recreational real estate boom of Miami proportions. High land prices have in turn driven even more Vermonters into white urban slums or

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the trailer-park shantytowns that mushroom along the roadsides. While the ski towns like Manchester and Woodstock are developed into alpine paradises, the natives come to resent "out-of-staters" and a mean "little Vermont" mentality flourishes. When the snows fail and gas prices rise, tens of thousands working in the false-bottom economy have no meat for the table except what they shoot during hunting season.

Most Vermont politicians seem oblivious to this tragedy. This is the state whose first legislators galloped from town to town on horseback to avoid their creditors. Keep in mind that the first statehouse was whittled down to wood chips by the jackknives of backwoods politicians. And remember that for 100 years Vermont voters sent their misfits, their unemployables, to represent them in Montpelier. Politics was the state's original welfare program. The tradition, some would argue, continues in the Vermont Republican and Democratic Parties, but television now makes it all seem more dignified.

The Republicans, their once incontestable farm and small-town majority disappearing, have not devised a theory to explain either the depression or the party's political eclipse. The GOP's conservative faction looks enviously across the Connecticut River at New Hampshire, where Gov. Meldrim Thomson keeps taxes down, and newspaper publisher William Loeb terrorizes anyone who works for a living into hunting for Communists under the privy. But Vermont conservatives lack the backing from industry to go the New Hampshire road. When the Republican 1974 gubernatorial candidate, state Sen. Walter "Peanut" Kennedy, based his campaign on the promise to fire the state's new Occupational Health Commissioner, former Chicago 7 defendant Dr. John Froines, an unusually high off-year turnout of 55 per cent came out to elect his opponent, Thomas P. Salmon.

The Democrats, on the other hand, have tried for more than thirty years to form a united statewide organization with a discernible political agenda. Alas, without success: a Hatfield-McCoy feud between liberals and conservatives, exacerbated by endless regional bickering between counties and intense competition between party personalities, have left the Democrats tuckered. Moderate to liberal politicians like Governor Salmon simply ignore the Democratic State Committee, running their own campaigns from privately raised war chests. Salmon, once known as "the best damn lawyer ever to come out of Bellows Falls," has grown into his office by issuing press statements on every conceivable social problem. He could be described as an outspoken liberal on energy policy, land use and industrialization. But to the realist, he offers a warmed-over New Deal that Vermonters could have had in 1934 if there had been a Democratic Party in the state.

The missing link in the major parties' understanding is the long-standing—and long hidden—radical tradition in Vermont. It stretches all the way back to the 1781 farmers' revolts against outside control by both the wealthy merchant interests of Portsmouth, N.H. and the landed aristocracy of New York State. While elements on either side of Vermont maneuvered for post-colonial dominance, southern Vermont yeomen broke away to create the independent Republic of Vermont under a progressive, liberal constitution. Their rebellion was crushed by troops under Ethan Allen, but minor outbreaks against centralized authority continued for generations. The same source of rural Populism expressed itself again in the last half of the 19th century, when farmers built the Grange movement in opposition to the railroads and the beginning sweeps of land concentration. To that must be added a history of radical industrial unionism, both in the machine-tool factories first established around Springfield during the Civil War, and in the now-defunct marble mines of Proctor, where Italian workers fought bitter strikes.

The depression, the war and the anti-communism of the McCarthy era were almost enough to stamp out the radical past. It is as a renovation of this heritage that the Liberty Union must be understood. As recently as the late 1960s, the Left consisted mainly of exurban youth who had stumbled into the countryside either to form rural communes or with the delirious notion that they could set up *fidelista* guerrilla *focos* for making revolution. The Liberty Union's founding, although it took place in the storms of the spring 1970 protests against the Cambodian invasion, reflected both the new and old radicalism. The party's inspiration came from former Vermont Rep. William H. Myer, a 57-year-old forester and Grange man, whom the Democrats had dumped in 1962 for his mugwump views on disarmament, redistribution of income, and the Kennedy administration's growing involvement in Indochina. Myer, who became the party's first Senatorial candidate, was joined on the first Liberty Union ticket by Congressional candidate Dennis Morrisseau, a 30-year-old son of French-Canadian immigrants and a former Army lieutenant, who had won national headlines for his one-man demonstration outside the White House, in uniform, against Vietnam. There was also the party's indefatigable organizer, a 36-year-old transplanted New York attorney named Peter Diamondstone. Diamondstone had led the first welfare rights strikes in the state and been fired from OEO for violating the Hatch Act at the same time that he was excluded from the state bar for refusing to take a loyalty oath. The three L.U. leaders were supported by a small McCarthy-style volunteer battalion. But Vermont is too large a state for a poor party to carry on door-to-door canvassing. With the media resolutely denying the Liberty Union equal coverage, the party slate was confined to public debates, to goading the Establishment candidates on the issues wherever a forum could be found. Most of the student and anti-war movement saw this as timidity and failed to commit itself to the L.U.'s brand of electoral politics. Meanwhile, Vermont workers, earning high wages to produce the arms their sons would die using, were uninterested.

By now, however, 1960s radicalism has rubbed off on young working-class Vermonters from the State University and colleges and the trade unions. They are the most tenacious and least ideological group attracted to Liberty Union. Darcy Troville, for example, the L.U. mayoral candidate from his hometown of Burlington, came to the party convention with a blunt message: "We have to run to win, not just to educate people. If we set up ward committees and commit a little more manpower to the Burlington elections, this party will be in office doing

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things for the people instead of out here talking."

From one view, the Liberty Union can no longer lose. It has no political competition for the actions it takes. Each of the party's issue campaigns builds its image and confidence, while even defeats build sympathy, involvement and a larger folllowing. There is consensus among political observers in the press that at the next general election the third party will be able to elect some state legislators and control some Vermont towns and cities.

But the first successes have also brought tensions. During infancy, a party must both weather defeats and do so while tolerating the greatest political adversity among its individual candidates and activists. The smell of victory puts that democracy under severe strain. For one thing, the killing pace of politics has begun to erode the dedication of the Liberty Union's organizers. And the more they expend themselves, the more they develop the entrepreneurial inclination that transforms political parties into clumsy corporations and instruments of oppression. At the party's summer convention, some members complained that they had had no personal life for four years; that Liberty Union needed a central committee to apportion organizing work and raise desperately needed funds. An opposing position, championed by Diamondstone, was that a central committee would curb the L.U.'s freewheeling style and make it more difficult for workers, women, old people and children to participate in party decisions. The dispute was an omen: factionalism will be an issue, particularly as more working-class Vermonters join the party to seek the immediate wages of radical reform. The danger is that they will find a newly entrenched bureau of the movement, telling them to sacrifice for the ultimate conquest. Such are the dialectics of Vermont's young Liberty Union, which must solve all its problems in order to solve any. □

THOSE CONVENIENT MIGRANTS

Europe's Expendable Work Force

JOHN BERGER

For capitalism migrant workers fill a labor shortage in a specially convenient way. They accept the wages offered and, in doing so, slow down wage increases in general. The significance of this is explained in a report by the German Institute for Economic Research:

> Although opposition to the continual inflow of foreign workers is to be found here and there, it is necessary to realize that with a labor market cut off from other countries the pressure of wages in the Federal Republic would become considerably stronger, due to increased competition by employers for the domestic labor potential. This increased pressure of costs could hardly fail to affect the competitiveness of West German enterprises, both in the export markets and at home.

Capitalism requires an ever increasing accumulation of capital. This demands ever increasing productivity. But the market does not always respond in regular correspondence with production: hence the cycles of recession and expansion and a rising tendency to inflation. Since the war these have been controlled, but controlling them involves fluctuations creating unemployment. There must be a labor reserve, which can be laid off during recessions and brought in when the economy is expanding. If the organized national working class formed this entire labor reserve and suffered accordingly, they might begin to demand that an end be put to the system: they might become a revolutionary proletariat. If, however, a large part of the labor reserve is made up of migrant workers, they can be "imported" when needed and "exported" (sent home) when made temporarily redundant, and there need be no political repercussions, for the migrants have no political rights and little political influence.

The migrant is in several other ways an "ideal" worker. He is eager to work overtime. He is willing to do shift work at night. He arrives politically innocent—that is to say without any proletarian experience. Those who apply for work at Citroën are often asked to show their tickets to prove that they have just arrived in France.

Any individual migrant who does become a leader or "militant" can be immediately and easily expelled from the country. The trade unions are unlikely to defend him. Migrants pay taxes and Social Security contributions but will not draw many benefits during their temporary residence. Their cost to the system in terms of social capital can be kept to a minimum. It is made difficult for a migrant's family to join him: hence his children don't have to be educated. As a "single" man (a man made single) he will not greatly exacerbate the working-class housing shortage. By German law a migrant must have a living-sleeping space of 64.5 square feet. Seventy per cent of migrant workers in Germany live singly, using not much more than that guaranteed minimum space. It is true that he may send a third of his wages out of the country, but a large proportion of the money sent away is spent on goods manufactured in the country where he works. Intergovernmental agreements about the reception of migrants often involve trade agreements in the obverse direction.

Then there is a global convenience. The employment of migrant workers relieves unemployment in their countries of origin. If all the 11 million migrants now in northwestern Europe returned home, their presence at home could well lead to explosive political situations; the most interested imperialist country would then be forced to intervene in order to preserve "law and order." A Spanish

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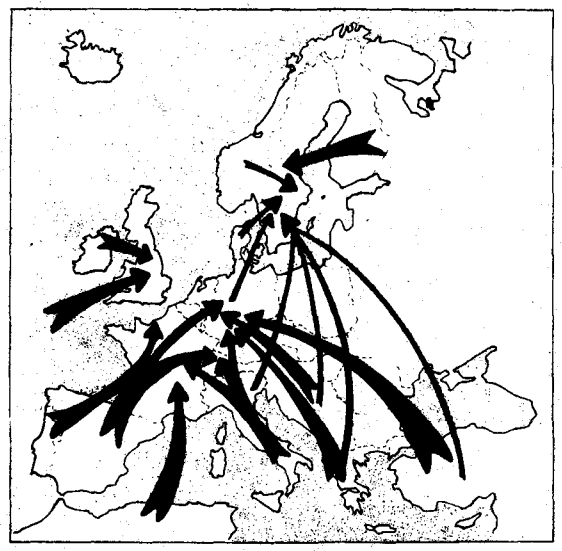

Illustrations from *A Seventh Man* (Viking)

migrant worker: "If we started a large-scale social revolution today in Spain, we would have to reckon with possible American intervention tomorrow. The countries of origin (where we come from) are becoming increasingly more dependent." With many workers abroad part of the calculation is that social revolution in their countries of origin is less likely.

Most important of all, however, is the political part of the calculation. Migrant workers do the most menial jobs. Their chances of promotion are exceedingly poor. When they work in gangs, it is arranged that they work together with other foreigners. Equal working relationships to indigenous workers are kept to a minimum. The migrant workers have a different language, a different culture and different short-term interests. They are immediately identifiable—not as individuals, but as a group (or a series of national groups). As a group they are at the bottom of every scale: wages, type of work, job security, housing, education, purchasing power.

Thus indigenous workers see another group, less privileged than they are, who differ from them. A Marxist would immediately point out that their differences are secondary, and that they share the same class interest. The recognition of this truth is necessary for any revolutionary movement. But the political convenience of migrant labor for capitalism lies precisely in the fact that this theoretical truth is overlaid daily and disguised by experience.

Geneva today (1974) is a town of 250,000 inhabitants. Its population fifteen years ago was 195,000. Geneva is not an industrial center: it is a center of paperwork, contracts, deals, plans, treaties, agreements, reports. Most of these emanate from organizations dedicated in one way or another to international cooperation and exchange: the United Nations, the International Red Cross, the International Labor Office, etc. Besides the governmental international agencies, there are also many multinational companies and banks. Geneva—perhaps more exclusively than any other town in Europe—is a capital of words: words written in reports and on checks, spoken words, interpreted and recorded. All of them relate to what is happening in the rest of the world; and many of them go out into the world as recommendations. During the last fifteen years the number of words has much increased and, correspondingly, the town has grown.

This is particularly evident to the north in the area around the original League of Nations building and the new airport. Here new offices, new flats for their employees, new shops, new hotels for delegates, new roads and new parking lots have extended far into what, fifteen years ago, were woods and fields. At that time the rain and snow which fell soaked into the earth. Today, in the new built-up area, the gutter water has to be run away. The existing drains and catchments for the north of the town are already overworked. The town and canton of Geneva therefore instructed their engineering department to work out a plan.

The plan was ambitious and progressive. It foresaw continuing growth; it considered the question of pollution; it resisted the temptation of a merely *ad hoc* and temporary solution and it was not timid about investing the taxpayers' money. The estimated cost of the new plan was $11 million. (It will cost far more.) It proposed a drainage system which would serve not only the new suburbs but all that part of Geneva which lies on the right bank of the lake.

To install drainage at street level would have seriously dislocated traffic—local and international—over a period of years. It would also have rendered new building more difficult—by overcrowding the network of pipes and services just below the surface. So the plan envisaged tunneling 90 or more feet underground.

One tunnel was to run for 3 miles under the town and would collect all the rain and gutter water of the right bank and discharge it into the Rhone below the lake. A second tunnel was to run parallel with the first for more than half the way, and would carry electricity and telephone cables and water mains for the new buildings and the new offices in which so many plans on a world scale were being drawn up. The diameter of each tunnel was to be 11.8 feet.

Tunneling began in June 1971 and will continue until 1976. In tunneling, space restricts the amount of labor that can be used. Even with three faces being worked simultaneously, there is work for only 100 men. Most of the men now working are Yugoslavs. There are also Spaniards and some Italians from southern Italy. On the many building sites in Geneva most workers are migrants. In the tunnels they are 100 per cent migrant. The two engineers and one of the foremen are German.

The workers, except for a specialist mechanic and electrician, are on nine-month contracts. When the contract finishes, they return to their Bosnian or Andalusian or Calabrian villages and then reapply for another year's chance of tunneling under the international metropolis. According to Swiss law the residence permits (Type A) of these workers do not permit them to stay longer than nine months (although they may continue to come year after year) nor to bring with them any of their family. While working in Geneva, they live in a wooden barracks belonging to the Swiss private contractors who are building the tunnel.

The plan, relying on the advice of geologists, assumed

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that nearly all the tunneling would be through sandstone. For the planners of tunnels sandstone is ideal because it is rock, not clay, yet it is not a hard rock; consequently there is no need for digging (as with clay) or blasting (as with hard rock) and, instead, a rotary cutting machine, "a mechanical mole" can bore through the sandstone (at the rate of about 30 feet a shift) and leave the tunnel behind it.

Unfortunately the geologists in Geneva were wrong in their predictions and the tunnels have run into wet earth and shingle. Here only shovels and hand-held pneumatic drills can be used, and after each advance of 30 feet—which may now take a whole week—tubes are rammed 45 feet into the face and solidifying chemicals injected to hold the water back. If the water breaks through, it can come at the rate of 30 gallons per minute.

These two sets of conditions offer the underground worker a choice. He can work with the machine in the dry, or with the drills in the wet. Working with the machine is more unhealthy because of the very high dust content in the air. Masks are available but the strenuousness of the work means that wearing them—with a reduced oxygen intake—makes the heart race. Nobody, except sometimes the sitting driver of the machine, wears one. The dust carries with it the risk of silicosis. Silicosis is often cited as a common occupational disease afflicting coal miners. It is caused by fine particles of silica which have been breathed into the lungs, remaining there and causing nodular lesions along the lymphatics and in the lung tissue. Two years' exposure to the dust particles can be enough to provoke the disease. Once it has begun there is no cure, and it can lead to total disability through the poorer and poorer functioning of the lungs. In coal itself there is no silica, but it is often present in the rock between seams. Sandstone—such as they are tunneling through under Geneva—may consist of as much as 90 per cent silica. Working in the wet is higher paid because it is more immediately uncomfortable and because the drilling and mucking out by hand require considerable endurance.

The workers are divided into gangs of seven or eight. They are never all of the same nationality. Whereas the town above specializes in international interpreting, the members of a gang have scarcely a dozen words between them. Misunderstandings have led to accidents. On the other hand—benefiting output—work proceeds with little talk. Except for one crane driver, none of the work is highly skilled and is fairly interchangeable; it involves mucking out earth and rocks at the face, keeping the conveyor belt clear, drilling when necessary, driving the train of trams between the face and the pit bottom, fitting the iron sections and grills which brace and line the inside of the tunnel, hosing liquid cement onto the grills, shoveling up, carting, and driving the machine. Each gang works an eight-hour shift, and three shifts work around the clock.

A gang is paid for nine hours, including a one-hour meal break. But nobody wants to eat in the tunnel. The air is stale. (Neither the water pumps nor the ventilating system work properly, but they are patched up when the word comes round that there is going to be an official inspection.) If the mole is drilling, a gray powder, fine as talc, lines skin, hair, nostrils, throat, lungs. The alternative of walking back to pit bottom and climbing up the ladders

to the surface would take too much time and effort. So the gangs work eight hours without a serious stop. Anyway they have an interest in forcing the pace.

At the wages offered, indigenous labor refuses this work. Migrants undertake it in order to earn and save the maximum amount of money in the shortest time. Officially, bonuses for extra output are illegal, but there are ways round this. And so the interests of migrant and contractor are made—apparently—to coincide. The faster a man works, or the worse the conditions so that he is entitled to a small compensatory supplement, the more he can save. For the contractor, the quicker the job is done, the greater the profit margin. An underground worker in the tunnels can earn between $650 and $750 per month.

About a quarter of his wages goes in tax, Social Security, and trade union dues (80 per cent of the men belong to the union). If he lives austerely, he can still save or send home $325 a month. With these savings he imagines he is transforming his own life and his family's. Working in the tunnel, each man is more or less locked in his personal vision of a different future. This adds to the isolation caused by language. It can lead, sometimes, to a kind of negligence—of the present and of the self.

Several aspects of the self are denied by the migrant's situation. He has no natural existence as a sexual being and no legitimate existence as a political being. He is there on sufferance for as long as he works in a tunnel.

At the beginning of 1973 four Spanish workers demanded better work conditions and went out on a half-day strike. By themselves. They were immediately sacked. Without a job they had no right to remain in the country. They were forced to return to Spain. Their record as undesirable "extremists" was doubtless made known to the Spanish authorities. The Swiss trade union did nothing to protect them. As a result of the Spaniards' action,

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however, a commission of four men, including a trade union representative, came to inspect the tunnel working conditions. It declared them satisfactory.

During the remainder of the same year—with a work force which never exceeded 100—two workers were killed, a third had both his legs smashed (and was still in hospital months later), a fourth had his spine seriously damaged, a fifth lost his hearing because of an explosion, and there were numerous minor injuries. The immediate causes of accidents are lack of space (for example between the trams and the sides of the tunnel there is no clearance on either side for a man), muck falling from unprotected conveyor belts sometimes running at above head level, poor lighting, the difficulty of hearing due to the noise level, problems of language, fatigue, impatient roofing in at the wet face, carelessness with machine controls.

Behind the immediate causes there is a general one. The only initiative still open to the migrant is the maximization of his earnings for the sake of a transformed future—or his attempt to transform his future. The contractors are concerned with the maximization of their profits. The relation between the two is exploitative. But, for very different reasons, both strive to reach the end of the tunnel as quickly as possible. For the migrant the alien present is expendable. (It is not only that the machines he uses were, at first, unfamiliar; compared with his previous life in the village, everything is alien.) For the contractor, the migrant is expendable.

The barracks, in which the tunnel workers lodge, are owned by the contractors. Rent and food are deducted from wages and marked on the pay slips. The barracks are situated on the other side of the town from the main shaft. Each gang is transported to and from work in a minibus belonging to the firm. Transport is free. After work, at the head of the shaft, there are cold-water washing facilities: for hot water the men await their return to the barracks. Geneva is a comparatively small town and the journey takes ten minutes.

In the main building of the barracks (housing approximately seventy men) there is a washroom with seven hot-water taps, seventeen cold-water taps, five lavatories and five showers (with hot water). The men sleep four to a room. The room measures 13 by 18 feet: walls and ceiling are wood. The heating is adequate in winter. Apart from the cramped space, the principal inconvenience is noise, and this is exacerbated by the fact that each shift gets up and goes to bed at different hours. Voices and footsteps sound very loud even from the next room. In situations in which time is served (conscripted service, prison) and which involve absence and sexual deprivation, to sleep is a deliverance from time. Sleeping becomes an active positive action.

Each occupant in a room has a bed, a small metal wardrobe (16 inches wide or alternatively half a wooden one; his locked suitcase on top of it), two small shelves, and the walls around, the ceiling above, his corner, to pin his pictures on. The bed costs $1.10 a night. The sheets are changed every two weeks. Except on Sundays, the rooms are tidied by three women (two Italians and one Yugoslav) who run the canteen and generally service the barracks.

There is a kitchen where men can prepare food themselves and eat it. Padlocked cupboards, like the wardrobes in the sleeping rooms, are supplied for keeping their food in. There is also a canteen—large enough for 100 men. Lunch costs 90 cents, breakfast (coffee and bread) 25 cents, supper 75 cents. In one corner there is a TV set. Scarcely any of the tunnel workers know enough French to follow the words. In the opposite corner there is a counter at which beer, wine, cigarettes, washing powder, razor blades are on sale.

For most men in the barracks, time off is time prolonged and wasted. They use the little they have to sleep in, wash their clothes, write letters. Nine out of ten are married. A few of the younger ones, who are willing to spend more money immediately, go into town on Sundays. For the majority their room with their bed in it is the center of their leisure. Men from other rooms drop in to talk or listen. (During the silences they return home.) Often one of the four in the room has a portable gramophone. They put on records bought in the capital of their own province. Sometimes they sing or play cards. Much of the time, though sitting together, they withdraw into personal anticipations or memories.

No tunnel worker who has found that he has the necessary endurance for the work, wishes to stop working in the tunnel before he has fulfilled his savings target—which is likely to take between three and five years. He knows that compared to many of his compatriots he is well placed. Each year, after nine months' work, he has to return to his country. Usually the contractor is willing to re-employ him when he reapplies. But when he re-enters Switzerland, he has to undergo a routine medical examination like all other migrants entering for the first or nth time. One of his recurring fears is that the next time this happens, he will be refused entry on the ground of a shadow on his lung X-ray. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

'Economics in the Interests of Society as a Whole'

THE POLITICAL ELEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC THEORY. *By Gunnar Myrdal. (Published in German in 1932.) Translated by Paul Streeten. Harvard University Press (1954). Out of print.*

VICTOR LEBOW

Despite the fact that he was one of the two recipients of the Nobel Prize for economics in 1974, Gunnar Myrdal does not enjoy high professional standing among orthodox American economists. They look upon him as a sociologist, and therefore ineligible for acceptance into their sacred mysteries, or they dismiss him as an "institutionalist," although the Nobel Prize was awarded him for work in such approved areas as monetary and business cycle theory.

In *Asian Drama*, his monumental study of South Asia, Myrdal defined his view: "The central idea in the institutional approach is that history and politics, theories and ideologies, economic structures and levels, social stratification, agriculture and industry, population developments, health and education, and so on, must be studied not in isolation, but in their mutual relationships." The truth is that most American economists retreat into abstruse mathematics and tortuous abstractions, in order not to face the facts of life. As the brilliant British economist, Joan Robinson, put it, they are mainly concerned with "proving useless theorems." The current shambles in American economic policies is enough to demonstrate the ineffectuality of most economic thinking here.

It is a pity that this early work of Gunnar Myrdal, *The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory*, is no longer available, for it should be of interest to every student of economics. Myrdal's later writings and research have reflected the approach he had developed as a very young professor of economics at the University of Stockholm. He has always tried to devise his theories to fit the facts, not the other way round. "A theory, in this context, means nothing more than a logically correlated system of questions addressed to the material. . . . The author of a theory should not fear, but expect as a perfectly normal consequence of fresh research, that further insights into various components of the complex of social relationships about which he has tried to inform himself will invalidate his theory, perhaps in fundamental respects." That approach invests his book with special importance.

It may be useful to look at the milieu in which the young Myrdal moved. Around the turn of the century, leadership in original contributions to economic theory had passed to Sweden, where Knut Wicksell, in particular, had achieved an international reputation. Some of his ideas anticipated those of John Maynard Keynes by several decades, and Swedish economists anticipated the Anglo-Americans in working out guidelines for public policy. In those years before World War I, there was hardly an example of an economist who had started out as one. For the most part, he had been either a man of practical affairs, like Ricardo, or had had previous training as a philosopher, historian, lawyer, mathematician or teacher. A man was usually led to a study of economics by his interest in social issues. Gunnar Myrdal had been graduated from the university as a lawyer.

He soon achieved some reputation for his work on monetary problems—work that, in time, helped Sweden move rapidly out of the depths of the Great Depression. But in the late 1920s, before the crash, Swedish economic discussion reflected a self-satisfied confidence in the permanence of stability and progress, and the teaching of economics was dominated by an uncompromising *laissez-faire* doctrine. Gunnar Myrdal, then a newly appointed professor of economics, attacked the dogmas of his elders in a series of lectures in 1928, intended originally as a popular exposition of his views. But in preparing this book, he says, he lost interest in the passing controversies of the day: "For there were much clearer formulations to be found further back in the history of economic thought and in other countries." This turned into a two-year task, and the book became, first, an effort to understand economic doctrines as a coherent, growing body of thought, and secondly, to subject them to a method of criticism which would lay bare the specific fallacies in these doctrines between, on the one hand, the facts and theoretical analysis they employed, and, on the other, the political conclusions they drew.

Thus this book is really a history of ideas in the development of economic theory and the political doctrines which developed from it. Myrdal says that modern economic theory began with the Physiocrats, proceeded via the classical school, and finally branched out into the several variants of neoclassical marginalism and welfare economics. He treats "scientific socialism" only briefly but places Karl Marx within the main current of Western economic theory. The principal emphasis is on the British contributions, but the book is distinguished by its wide-ranging scholarship, from pre-Platonic thought to Medieval scholasticism, from Adam Smith, Ricardo, John Stuart Mill and Marx, to Max Weber, Clark, and some of the American economists of that day. With a revised introduction, Myrdal could today bring it up to date to include their many successors in both the United States and Europe—and throw in the Greenspan-Simon-Butz-Burns quadrivium for good measure.

To a considerable extent, this work is also an exercise in epistemology, for Myrdal is concerned with the metaphysical elements which, from the beginnings of modern economics, had unconsciously been introduced into that discipline. Anyone who has read his later works has observed how explicitly Myrdal states his "value premises" in each. Thus, in *An American Dilemma—the Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, he declares that his "value premise" is "the American Creed," and how both the black and white populations of the United States accept this definition of what America stands for: the ideals of the essential dignity of the individual human being, of the fundamental equality of all men, and of certain inalienable rights to freedom, justice and a fair opportunity. In his *Asian Drama—an Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, he states his value premise as the need for realizing the ideal of modernization

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which is part of the new nationalism of underdeveloped countries.

Myrdal's determination to make clear the "bias" from which he develops his approach and his conclusions, stems from this early book in which he uncovered the unspoken value premises which have played so strong a role in the doctrinal development of modern economic theory. He shows how theories have been distorted, too, by the biases of the day. In part, these distortions arose from the persistence of certain moral considerations which were introduced by the utilitarians, who had borrowed them from the English philosophers, Locke and Hobbes. Equally influential were such metaphysical doctrines as that of "natural law" which has a long history stretching back into medieval theology, as well as the concept of *laissez faire* which came directly from the Physiocrats and which we associate with Adam Smith. Myrdal quotes Wicksell as saying that economics, like theology, and for about the same reasons, has hitherto failed to arrive at truths that are generally accepted, but in spite of that, all doctrines have been flatly contradicted by others, yet each is set forth as a scientific truth.

Surrounded by a powerful state and a stratified society, the early economists saw economic theory as a logically coherent system of causal relations, and the objective of their analysis was how to attain the "natural state," which was simply an ideal model of the society which actually existed in their time. They defined the society which *ought* to exist. For them economics was not separable from politics. Ricardo made this plain in the title of his most important work, *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, and developed the labor theory of value which became one of the foundation stones of Marx's critique of capitalism.

The spokesmen of the utilitarian philosophy, particularly Jeremy Bentham and J. S. Mill, infused a psychological element into value theory. To Myrdal, the theory of subjective value, or the theory of marginal utility, was a purely psychological approach, "deriving from Bentham's hedonistic pleasure-pain calculus." The idea of an economy operated in the interests of society as a whole, which interests could be objectively defined, was given new life by this theory. Myrdal's objection was not to the need for bettering social conditions but to the idea that this was the province of economic science. As he saw it at that time, economists cou'd study the facts and interpret their significance, but the kind of society that could be developed on the basis of their economic analyses he saw as basically a political problem. In short, when he wrote this book, he was insistent on the purity of economic science.

However, by the time the English translation appeared, Myrdal had modified some of his objections to the role of value premises in the work of his predecessors. He wrote later, "This implicit belief in the existence of a body of scientific knowledge acquired independently of all valuations is, as I see it now, naive empiricism. Facts do not organize themselves into concepts and theories just by being looked at; indeed, except within the framework of concepts and theories, there are no scientific facts but only chaos. There is an inescapable *a priori* element in all scientific work. Questions must be asked before answers can be given. The questions are an expression of our interest in the world: they are at bottom valuations. . . . I have arrived at the belief in the necessity of working always, from beginning to end, with explicit value premises. These value premises cannot be established arbitrarily; they must be relevant and significant for the society in which we live." (Myrdal now prefers to say "valuation" rather than "value" since the latter has so many meanings.) This does not mean that he sees economics as separate and apart from the other social sciences. In fact, in this first book of his, he puts it thus: "The technology of economics is a branch of modern, psychologically oriented sociology."

As a general criticism of classical economics, Myrdal makes the point that when economic theory attempts the logically impossible feat of arriving at political conclusions without political premises, it must fall into one form of logical fallacy or another. For the results of such reasoning are actually determined by the political biases of the time, the social setting, and the prejudices of the author. It is enough to read the pronouncements of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, or of Secretary Butz, to see the bearing of Myrdal's insight.

As a result of its retreat into increasingly abstract formulations and shaky premises, economic theory has become more and more isolated from the other social sciences. Myrdal wrote in his introduction to *Asian Drama* (a 3-volume study commissioned by the Twentieth Century Fund): "One preconception of mine deserves mention, as it determined my approach to the task. My personal journey through life and work, from early youth when my research interests were focused on economic theory in a very narrow sense, had instilled in me an increasingly firm conviction that economic problems cannot be studied in isolation, but only in their demographic, social, and political setting."

Poems by William Stafford

ONE OF THE YEARS

Hat pulled low at work,
I saw the branding iron
take the first snowflake.

DUCKS DOWN IN THE MEADOW

Stars, it is the end.
Ducks begin to wake—they'll never
walk as well as we do. It's
uphill to the water. Air loves
a quack. Other ponds or rivers
can't be as good as this.
It is all right to shiver your tail
and holler. No one will ever
bend a neck like Mama. Feet are to feel
earthquakes before they come,
and after they have gone. You won't
get to Heaven or see times again like this
till you've dived a wave, seen
dawn arrive in gold there along the crest,
the way it does for us.

ROOM 423

Trapped in our dim skins, we watch
a glow on the wall. It is
only the radio tower, its red light
on and off. Lower, one light stays
on. It is only for planes, to warn them,
that's all—it's not an eye or anything.
And it looks strange only because now
the sky at night is murky—the smog,
you know. That's all. Look—it is
just a steel tower and the dark
is weak there behind it, where lights
climb toward red all over the city.
Look—now all of it stays while we
know the waves from the top sweeping
for help everywhere through the sky all night,
that's all, just letting go, letting go.

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As one studies the books, articles and lectures Gunnar Myrdal has produced in a long and useful life, it becomes quite evident that in this book, in which he analyzed the political elements in the development of Western economic thought, he had worked out for himself not only a critique of the economic theories of the past 200 years but also the direction his own work was to follow for the rest of his life. As he looks back upon his criticisms, his view is that while he recognizes the contributions of the economists before him, there is no reason for not criticizing their errors, since "there is no point in retaining the scaffolding after the house is built."

Myrdal sees society in terms of the various interests operating within it, and conflicts between them. As he points out, there has always been a tendency in economics to gloss over conflicts of interests. Historically, this can be attributed to the belief in social harmony which stemmed from the philosophical inspiration of political economy—the philosophy of "natural law" and its English counterpart, utilitarianism. The thinkers of those schools believed in social harmony, and their practical recommendations assumed harmony as a normative value. It is true that under the pressure of socialist and institutionalist criticism, there has been a retreat from the conservative interpretation of the doctrine of harmony. Accordingly, thoroughgoing *laissez faire* is no longer advanced as a prescription to be followed under all circumstances.

But of course, as one listens to Gerald Ford these days, promising businessmen to reduce every form of government intervention into their affairs, it is obvious that *laissez faire* is alive and kicking in Washington. Confronted with the present ideological mishmash which passes for economic theory and planning in the United States, Gunnar Myrdal would probably mince no words. And knowing this country as intimately as he does, he might very well counter with the sharp criticism he made in his latest book, published in 1973, the volume of essays entitled *Against the Stream*. In it he wrote:

> It is not a tenable position for the United States to be that country among the rich countries that has the most and worst slums, the highest rate of unemployment and unemployables, the least developed health services, and that is most niggardly toward its old people and its poor children, of whom there are so many, as well as being the country that leads the whole Western world in violence, crime, and corruption in high places.

As should be obvious even from this brief summary of some of his views, Gunnar Myrdal is highly critical of the specialization and the compartmentalization of the social sciences. Nor, in spite of his academic credentials, does he believe in the tradition of the ivory tower. He is an activist as well as a student. He has always been concerned with practical applications in his studies. His book, *Monetary Equilibrium*, was published in Sweden in 1931, and that work, along with the studies of some of his colleagues, helped Sweden out of the depression of the 1930s. Together with his equally remarkable wife, Dr. Alva Myrdal, he wrote a book on population and family policy (in 1934), which resulted in the setting up of Royal Population Commissions in all the Scandinavian countries and in Great Britain, and opened an era of social reform in Sweden that was focused on the welfare of children and family.

In 1937, he wrote a book advocating radical changes in Sweden's agricultural policy. It recommended raising the income levels of farm workers by direct state subsidies. In it he also proposed that children get a free meal in school, and that families under certain income levels be enabled to buy food at reduced prices. His proposals have changed the nature of agricultural relationships in Sweden, and kept farm labor happy to stay on the land. Incidentally, his idea of reduced-price food for lower-income families was the inspiration for the food stamp plan in our own country.

Myrdal has been Minister of Commerce and a member of the Senate of his own country. During the decade between 1947 and 1957, he organized and directed the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, following his service as chairman of the Swedish Planning Commission. Right up to the present time, Gunnar Myrdal has maintained his connection with the University of Stockholm, where he is the director of institutes dealing with the problems of underdeveloped countries and with the problems of peace. During the American intervention in Vietnam, he was chairman of the Swedish Vietnam Committee, and also chairman of the International Committee of Inquiry into the United States War Crimes in Indochina. One recalls that Sweden was without an American ambassador for a time because the Nixon administration was bitter and resentful at Swedish disapproval of our war in Indochina. At present he is working on a re-evaluation of his classic study of the Negro problem in the United States, which he says he intends to entitle, "The American Dilemma Revisited."

So the young professor who, almost fifty years ago, explored the hidden value premises of that long procession of economists who had preceded him, has done more than insist on making his own values very explicit. For it appears that he has developed for his own life a theory that guides his activities: it is that the social sciences must not only be scientific but also capable of practical service to society—to humanity the world over. □

In a Miracle-Worker's Court

THE POLISH LAD. *By Isaac Joel Linetski. Translated by Moshe Spiegel. The Jewish Publication Society of America. 305 pp. $7.95.*

DAVID ROSENTHAL

In recent years interest has mounted, both among Jews and non-Jews, in the old Hasidic world of Eastern Europe. That world has had some effective propagandists in figures like Martin Buber, Marc Chagall and, to a certain extent, Isaac Bashevis Singer. All of these have presented us with an exotic, colorful universe of dybbuks, golems, and miracle-working rabbis, a universe rich in vision and feeling. Very attractive. And since European Hasidism died with the Nazis, we can enjoy these fantasies without any interference from reality.

Isaac Linetski (1839-1915) had to grow up in the middle of such a universe. The son of a Hasidic rabbi, he rebelled against the constraints of parochial Jewish life and went on to become a propagandist among his fellows for everything he considered modern and enlightened. *The Polish Lad* was his most famous work. Between 1867 and 1939 it went into more than thirty editions. The book satirized the corrupt, stifling life in Jewish villages. It also pleaded with the Jews to emerge from their collective nightmares and enter the world of the 19th century. Both satire and plea are presented through a series of adventures which befall Linetski's Hasidic protagonist.

The story begins with his birth. The

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first scenes are of his initiation into that terrifying complex of demons and spirits which surrounded Hasidic Jews, demanding fear and appeasement. Then we follow him through his education—a kind that still prevails in some Muslim countries—consisting mainly of beatings and rote memorization. Out of it all, according to Linetski, emerges a typical Hasid, absolutely ignorant of both national and international events. In his world the important things are the bitter struggles between competing local rabbis. The hero of the novel has no secular education at all, nor has he any intention of working. Work is only for women. Real men devote themselves to the study of the Talmud.

But the price of such sloth and such scholarship is a high one. The rural Hasidim are desperately poor. Linetski's book is crammed with images of filth and disease. Almost every child is covered with scabs, almost every home is a hovel. Even some of the synagogues are barely more than mud huts. The only rich men are a few Hasidic rabbis, and it is in one of their courts that our hero finally settles. Through his eyes we see a miracle-performing rabbi at work. Jews flock from miles around, seeking to overcome barrenness or sterility, to find the cure for some physical or psychological ailment, or to win intercession with the Russian authorities. The rabbi happily extracts money from all comers. He gathers unto himself the profits of his people's accumulated misery and ignorance. Meanwhile the Jews live without hospitals, without decent schools, without care for the aged and abandoned. All their excess wealth flows to the rabbi, who in exchange gives them amulets and prayers.

In any confrontation with the Russian state, of course, even such holy prophets have to bow and scrape. In one scene, a group of Hasidim on their way to a wedding are stopped by two policemen. The Jews grovel and beg. Then, when the cops get disgusted and drive away, the Hasidim congratulate themselves on the miracle. They attribute it in part to a worm-eaten hat they were carrying, a hat which formerly belonged to some famous sage.

The Polish Lad is a classic attack on the evils of religion. And indeed, it is not for the novelty of his ideas that we might read Linetski today. Some of his reformist, "enlightened" positions hardly seem very enlightened now. For example, instead of the hard-working, exploited Hasidic woman of his day, Linetski proposes another kind of domestic object: that delicate, sensitive creature so much in vogue among the 19th-century bourgeoisie. Even in his own day, Linetski was not really in the vanguard of European Jews, who were among the most revolutionary figures of their time.

As a reformist tract, then, *The Polish Lad* is only mildly interesting. What *is* of interest is the detailed picture it gives of intellectual suffocation and economic exploitation wrought by 19th-century Hasidic rabbis. In presenting us with scenes like the one of the hero's abandoned wife in her hut, starving and surrounded by tubercular children while her husband lives at a rabbinical court, Linetski brings to life all the suffering and squalor of Polish Jews before the First World War. One reason for the growth of Hasidism was these same Jews' sense of powerlessness. Historical reality was something they felt too weak to confront. In the end, however, it destroyed them all the same. At this moment, when we face a similar sense of hopelessness, and feel similarly drawn to mysticism, it is good to have Linetski's realistic picture of a community devoted to its gurus. □

A Reasonable Rationalist

THE USES OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION, And Other Talks to Students. *By Brand Blanshard. Edited by Eugene Freeman. Open Court Publishing Co. 415 pp. $9.95.*

JAMES GUTMANN

In his Preface to *The Uses of a Liberal Education*, Blanshard places his reflections on this subject into the framework of his total philosophy as developed in his principal writings: *The Nature of Thought, Reason and Goodness* and *Reason and Analysis*. He emphasizes his conviction, advanced particularly in *The Nature of Thought*, that the cognitive impulse is the constituent of human nature most important for education, that thought is that activity of the mind aiming directly at truth, and that the good of thought is understanding. "And what is it to understand?" he asks. "It is always to place something in a whole that renders it intelligible," Blanshard replies to his own question, thus placing his thought in the philosophic tradition of Spinoza, Hegel and F.H. Bradley.

The Uses of a Liberal Education, though reflecting this tradition, is written without technicalities and is also free from the pedagogic jargon which disfigures so much discussion of education. Indeed these collected papers are largely lectures on education delivered to laymen, audiences at college commencements and similar convocations, and their tone prevails even in the chapters which appeared previously in academic publications. There are twenty-three such papers divided into three sections—first a series of discussions of educational "Ends": the title essay and others with a broad perspective, "The Test of a University," "Education as Philosophy" and "Education as Values" are typical examples. The second section, called "Corollaries," consists of more casual papers on more topical questions, such as "Quantity and Quality in American Education," "Some Current Issues in Education" and "Some Fringe Benefits of Education." The concluding section, identified as "Homilies," on themes such as serenity, courage and admiration, is even more informal than the chapters in the previous sections and remind me of William James's *Talks to Students on Some of Life's Ideals*. They have a similar flair and the qualities of writing done *con amore*.

Throughout the book Blanshard is an advocate of the educational priority of the humanities. "The humanities," he declares, "enlarge our range of election among the ways of living, they enable us to enjoy vicariously flights of imagination and feeling that we should never have been able to achieve alone; they refine and fulfill by catharsis battalions of impulses that would otherwise be starved; they sensitize us to varieties of good and evil and discipline us in appraising them." Again: "Just as the liberal college cannot teach everything but can teach the principles in the light of which other things become intelligible, so it cannot teach all techniques, but can instill those habits and standards that are the conditions of effective thinking in any field. There is no one road to such discipline; it may be provided by any subject; but some subjects lend themselves to it more readily than others." Blanshard leaves no doubt that he regards the humanities as uniquely competent to achieve

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these educational ends. Some readers may judge that his preference leads to inadequate recognition of the liberalizing potentialities of education in the sciences.

Though Blanshard's view of the role of the sciences is thus limited, he sees in them a continuity with the essential values of humanistic education. "Common sense, science and philosophy," he writes, "are merely segments in one continuous effort to make everything intelligible through seeing its place in the system of things. . . . Bradley's philosophy made sanity in this large sense the end and criterion in the sphere of thought." Sanity and reasonableness are indeed the touchstones of Blanshard's rationalism. Would that all rationalists were, like him, exponents of reasonableness! "When we turn to such figures as Marcus Aurelius and Abraham Lincoln," he writes, "we see the reasonable mind in . . . the aspect of imperturbable justice and magnanimity. As for reasonableness in feeling, we have on the one hand the long line of entries from Longinus through Goethe to Eliot, from whom we learn the sobriety of taste, and on the other the long line from Buddha to Albert Schweitzer to tell us the secrets of inward peace."

Common sense, reasonableness, imperturbability, inward peace—these are key words in Blanshard's philosophy of education. Almost sixty years ago I heard him speak in these terms when, with three fellow students I sat at his then-youthful feet in a senior seminar in Columbia College. Through the decades I have continued to learn from him, though I have never been in any sense his philosophic disciple. There is special pleasure now in reading and recommending words which he has addressed to college generations that include some of my own grandchildren. □

The Pleasures of Pessimism

THE NEW GODS. *By E.M. Cioran. Translated by Richard Howard. Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co. 120 pp. $5.95.*

EDWARD MARCOTTE

The six essays contained in *The New Gods* range over all of Cioran's major themes: the price of knowledge, the infirmity of flesh, death, mysticism, terror, false attachments. "Encounters with Suicide" is a much more intimate investigation of this taboo subject than Camus's well-known posing of the question. "The Undelivered" considers the mystic's quest. "The Demiurge" is a meditation on our obsession with God; "Strangled Thoughts" a series of brief, disconnected paragraphs marked by rage, indignation, irony. "The New Gods" follows a more coherent argument than the other essays: relative advantages of polytheism over monotheism. "Paleontology" is a reflection on decay and death occasioned by a visit to a museum—a confrontation with "those empty sockets that stare at you more insistently than eyes, that rummage sale of skulls, that automatic sneer on every level of zoology."

In a time when practically everything is accepted, E.M. Cioran seems a likely candidate for unacceptability. Were he an American writing in English, Cioran might have a hard time getting his essays published in literary quarterlies, no philosophical journal would have him, and it may not be too far-fetched to picture him resorting to a vanity press. Though he is one of the outstanding thinkers writing today in the loose, personal tradition of Montaigne, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Thoreau—touching on deeply spiritual matters from a nonpartisan, nonacademic, nontechnical viewpoint—his audience is not large. "Only the writer without a public," he remarks, "can allow himself the luxury of being sincere."

Son of a Greek Orthodox priest, Cioran was born in Romania in 1911, moved to Paris in 1937, and since deciding to write in French in 1947 he has produced half a dozen essay collections. *The New Gods* is the third of these translated into English by Richard Howard, after *The Temptation to Exist* (1968), and *The Fall into Time* (1970).

In all of the twenty-six essays in those volumes there is hardly a dull sentence. The writing is endlessly quotable, phenomenally witty, entertaining, lucid. The pleasure of reading Cioran makes his relative neglect even more of a paradox. It may be that we are tired of hearing many of the things he has to say. He is often compared to Nietzsche, for example, and indeed resembles him in many ways. Another matter is Cioran's extreme darkness and cynicism. He should be ranked with the great pessimists and cynics of all time, a successor to Diogenes, Voltaire, Schopenhauer. A Swiftian misanthrope, he writes, "Let us block the way of all flesh. . . ."

Though a number of contemporary writers equally dark and cynical have gained their share of popular recognition—Beckett certainly, whom Cioran also resembles in some respects, and his countryman, Ionesco—there is an important question of genre that helps to explain Cioran's relative obscurity. He himself has suggested (in his essay, "Beyond the Novel") that a Pascal or a Descartes writing today would produce novels. Cioran is a philosopher who by a slim margin of tendency has missed being a novelist. To call him a philosopher sounds ambiguous. As philosophy, especially in the Anglo-American tradition, becomes more specialized and technical, its relevance to spiritual concerns becomes remote. The philosophical essay as practiced by Emerson and Thoreau has virtually ceased to exist in this country on any serious level.

Another reason, I think, why Cioran hasn't achieved the reputation he deserves is our present orientation to programs, therapies, *action*. Cioran takes a fanatical pleasure in reiterating with

Edward Marcotte has contributed essays and reviews to Partisan Review, Chicago Review *and* The Nation.

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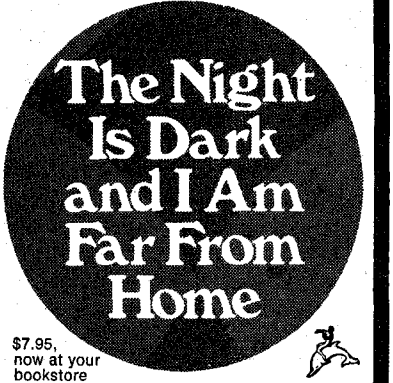

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ever deepened insight and precision the horrors of existence, the traps of knowledge, consciousness and ego; yet he offers no program for deliverance. Eloquence and wit are poor routes to salvation. As Cioran confesses, ". . . all my metaphysical inclinations come up short against my frivolity."

Yet I suspect that Cioran speaks to a special self or region in many of us. Responding to him is a private thing—he is no thinker to discuss and share, or that only with a few close initiates. Pessimism (like the currently more popularized subject of death) is a primal taboo in our society. We feel a strong obligation to suppress any problems and questions that resist being appropriated under some social or practical heading. Those apparently insoluble problems of existence, we would like to think, are projections of neurosis or faulty ideology.

For someone who views literature or ideas from a social or utilitarian standpoint, Cioran will seem to be a monument of self-indulgence. Even assuming that literature should not be judged primarily for its usefulness to society, we'd still want to ask what use Cioran himself hopes to derive from shaping such discomforting reflections into eloquent prose. And the question is best asked not in sarcasm but out of the curiosity of one who admires these writings and therefore seeks to plumb their ultimate wisdom: to know what barricade their author seeks to erect between himself and the discontents he writes of, what consolation he hopes to gain, what absolution, what balm. "If we make doubt a goal," he writes, "it can be as comforting as faith."

Susan Sontag, in her introduction to *The Temptation to Exist*, describes Cioran as politically conservative; I'd call him closer to apolitical. Political hopes are based on the belief that at least some of mankind's problems can be solved on that plane. But as Cioran has it, "The horrors that glut the universe constitute an integral part of its substance; without them, the universe would physically cease to exist."

Such a position is amenable only to mysticism. Yet despite his continuing argument and fascination with mysticism, Cioran refrains from any commitment. This indeed is a key feature of his position. His skepticism seems almost gratuitous at times. Cioran is well aware, and even obsessively so, how lucidity and skepticism preclude the surrender necessary for salvation. Is it that his skepticism reaches to the authenticity of transcendence itself, or is he stopped merely by his own confessed inequality to the task? May it not be that Cioran has reached the point of no return with lucidity and eloquence, the point at which they become sophistry; where—to turn one of his own insights against him—one proceeds from words to the actual, rather than vice versa, and where style is an object of idolatry and the presentation of an idea takes precedence over the idea itself?

Attitudes like Cioran's are signs of fanatical belief in one's own perceptions. That is to say, believing one's perceptions are authentic and infallible representations of *how it is*. Such a condition precludes either a religious leap of faith or consolation through trust in the perceptions of others. Doctrines and ideologies can't get to him, since the only acceptable dogma is his own awareness and judgment. And despite Cioran's undoubted perceptiveness, despite the depth and often uncanny precision of his intelligence, can we be sure that he does not in the end succumb to a sort of blindness? Considering the present hold exerted by epistemological relativism, when all world views, ideologies, positions have come to appear arbitrary, gratuitous, a matter of temperament or programming, such a position as Cioran's must indeed seem quaint, perhaps antiquated, and most significantly, *unnecessary*.

Yet Cioran himself has recognized this option but turned it to his own purposes: "Doubt too is capable of fervor, doubt too, in its way, triumphs over every perplexity, doubt too has an answer to everything." □

Ditch English and Bank English

BLUE-COLLAR JOURNAL: A College President's Sabbatical. *By John R. Coleman. J.B. Lippincott Co. 252 pp. $6.95.*

MARTHA B. TACK

Everyone can sympathize with Walter Mitty, the little guy who dreams of a bigger, more powerful role. John Coleman proves, however, that the men Walter Mitty dreams about have problems, frustrations and dreams of their own. Curious about the other side of the looking glass, he dreamed of breaking out of the "lockstep" of academic life to become the opposite of what he was—a blue-collar worker. The important point is that unlike the Mittys of the world, Coleman did what he sought to do. His dream became reality when, at the age of 51, he left his roles of college president, economics professor, and bank chairman in Philadelphia to work for two months as a ditch digger in Atlanta, a sandwich-and-salad man in Boston, and a garbage collector in College Park, Md.

What prompted him to embark on so unusual a quest? As president of Haverford College, he found that his contacts were narrower than they had been when he worked in urban programs, race relations and labor research. He found himself "settling too comfortably into talking with other people who thought about as I did on most issues." His role of president also made personal contacts difficult; at faculty parties he "was almost always the president and never Jack Coleman." He remained the solitary figure at the center of a bureaucratic web, and though he repeatedly says he enjoys being alone—"the plain truth is that I rather enjoy my own company"—he has "lots of room for more and closer friends."

Martha Tack is a writer who has taught English at Pratt Institute, the New School for Social Research, and Herbert Lehman College in New York City.

The clash between hard-hats and student activists in the Wall Street area in May of 1970 was for him the "climactic event." When he read of the fighting he became aware of how isolated and cut off all people are. Though for some time he had considered getting away from the college campus, after the Wall Street incident he committed himself to learning "more of what both sides were saying and feeling."

Communication in the blue-collar world was of particular interest to him. While he had gagged over four-letter words in the past, as a ditch digger he had to use them to be heard. What he discovered was that four-letter words were not obscenities. They expressed neither anger nor joy. Rather, they were "integral parts of the rhythm of speech, punctuating . . . and highlighting thought." Unlike "the prolonged refinements" at the bank and college, the ditch digger's talk was brief and direct; instead of an elaborate academic orientation on his first day of work, he was told to "get a shovel out of the trailer and get in that ditch." The talk was limited and unvaried, but he liked its vitality: "I learned that ditch English has a power to communicate that bank English lacks."

He didn't mind the routine of manual labor either. While there were "countless expectations" regarding the role of president, he found that "the expectations held out for a laborer are not high." A ditch digger was nothing more than "a goddamn

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laborer," a garbage collector was "a goddamn monster," and a restaurant worker was a "nonperson." Names and backgrounds didn't matter because a laborer was "an impersonal item." If a co-worker needed a shovel, he simply reached a hand out for the tool and then returned it, "never once having looked at or spoken to me. The shovel was there, and that was enough." This change of pace was just what he wanted. He enjoyed the rhythm of his life as a ditch digger and the challenge of coping with crowds as a sandwich man. He found a kind of exhilaration in driving a garbage truck.

But his commitment to the blue-collar role went beyond using four-letter words and doing physical work. It went beyond living in dingy rooming houses, wearing shabby uniforms and eating simple food. He could have been a detached, neutral, indifferent observer, since one of his selves was back at Haverford, but instead he rediscovered feelings that had been deadened by the monotony of his academic life. He felt joy when he was praised by the manager and distress when he was criticized by the chef. After he was abruptly fired from a job and the pain of job hunting became unbearable, his sensory impressions became especially acute: the "white glare . . . threw sharp shadows . . . onto the linoleum floor. I could see every bite that I ate." When he felt relief at having found a job, "the eye wanted to be everywhere at once." He became so involved in his role of trashman that man and mask were finally indistinguishable: "I was no longer acting a part. . . . This time I was an aggrieved employee."

What Mr. Coleman learned from his experience was that the two sides of the looking glass are not so different after all: "there is nothing more unreal about a campus than there is about a ditch, a restaurant, or a corporate office." Every worker experiences "frustrations, joys, pains, and dreams in just about the same mixture." Manual work, he learned, is as strenuous physically as academic work is mentally; while construction workers and students are different, they also have a lot in common. Differences are important, he tells us, but similarities are too. If harmony is to be achieved, it is necessary to see both (at least in college, where students should be taught to "think both critically and humanely," to "separate facts from fiction and keep a healthy respect for both").

He follows his own advice in his journal. He sees not only the blue-collar world in relation to the academic world but also his present in relation to his past (interspersing reminiscences throughout), and his experience in relation to his books (comparing an incident in the ditch to an incident in Sean O'Casey's autobiography). And though he poses serious questions about himself, he can also step back to see humor.

It's not important that he doesn't leave us with any final solutions. What is important is that he fulfilled his dream, that he had "the courage to take a hard look at himself." His experience provided him with some insight into the lives of people whose circumstances were very different from his—and that allowed him to see his own work and life from a fresh point of view. In the end he realized that assuming the mask of blue-collar worker had not resulted in a loss of identity, for he had "found some part of it along the way." □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

Not since Peter Bogdanovich's *Paper Moon* has there been as ingratiating a movie about movies as Howard Zieff's *Hearts of the West.* It is more overtly so, being in fact about shooting movies—shoestring Westerns back in the early 1930s; among other time clues there's a poster of Garbo in *Anna Christie.* And it plays less for sentiment, but very broadly for laughs. It is about as subtle as Hoot Gibson's ten-gallon hat, yet fitted and polished and tuned on the hilarious deadpan assumption that it is a true gem of the silver screen.

I shall give the plot a wide berth, but briefly: Lewis Tater (Jeff Bridges), an Iowa farm boy mildly deranged by the dream of becoming a successful pulp writer like Zane Grey, heads for what turns out to be a

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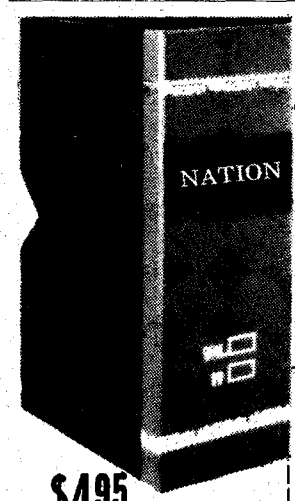

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whistle stop in Nevada, where a mail order ad has assured him there is a college that teaches the craft. He finds that the college is a post office box and the faculty a pair of confidence men, continues west with that unsavory pair on his heels, falls in with a company of movie cowboys on location, rouses the sympathy of the wise and beautiful script girl, is soon himself a member, then the star, of the company and is last seen reclining on a stretcher, lightly riddled by bullets, but with every prospect for a happy future. That, I'm ashamed to say, is a ludicrous simplification of this action-packed drama.

Hearts of the West gives a fine opportunity for playing the game of prototypes. Bridges, madly enthusiastic, stubbornly naive, but surprisingly resourceful and with astonishing powers of recuperation, is clearly Harold Lloyd—and, yes, he gets the girl after whom more brutish men have lusted in vain. The larcenous educators, Anthony James and Richard Shull, do with their roles what Laurel and Hardy might have done with the Duke and the Dauphin in *Huckleberry Finn*. Andy Griffith plays Howard Pike, leader of the cowboy posse, protector of the innocent Tater and not quite the man he seems to be. I can't put a name to his model, but the part was almost obligatory in Westerns: he is the treacherous ally who is redeemed in the last reel by the purity and bravery of the hero. That final scene, with Griffith and Blythe Danner (the script girl) crouched lovingly over the picturesquely disabled Bridges, sent me rejoicing into the street. And Miss Danner recalls Zasu Pitts, but early in her career, when she was still playing romantic leads.

Alan Arkin is, after Bridges, the second focus of the film. He is Kessler, producer and director of the ad lib epics he films to the specifications of a fox-faced distributor. Half lunatic, half con man, Arkin might be a stand-in for W.C. Fields, except that the physical discrepancy is too great. And in any case Arkin has long since developed his own brand of ambiguity and sleight of hand. His presence, along with that of Donald Pleasence as a wealthy script agent of unstated but obviously peculiar habits, makes explicit the sophistication underlying the wide-eyed gaze of the film (but it is a mistake to introduce an actor as compelling as Pleasence and then not make much use of him). Like all successful spoofs, *Hearts of the West* is canny and controlled; it is witty beneath the tomfoolery and appeals to the intelligence of its audience. (It was written by a newcomer named Rob Thompson; Mr. Zieff was the director of *Slither*.) But enough—a film like this can be killed with talk; it is there to be seen, not analyzed. □

TO A BLOSSOMING PEAR TREE

Beautiful natural blossoms,
Pure delicate body,
You stand without trembling.
Little mist of fallen starlight,
Perfect, beyond my reach,
How I envy you.
For if you could only listen,
I would tell you something,
Something human.

An old man
Appeared to me once
In the unendurable snow.
He had a singe of white
Beard on his face.
He paused on a street in Minneapolis
And stroked my face.
Give it to me, he begged,
I'll pay you anything.

I flinched. Both terrified,
We slunk away,
Each in his own way dodging
The cruel darts of the cold.

Beautiful natural blossoms,
How could you possibly
Worry or bother or care
About the ashamed, hopeless
Old man? He was so near death
He was willing to take
Any love he could get,
Even at the risk
Of some mocking policeman
Or some cute young wiseacre
Smashing his dentures,
Perhaps leading him on
To a dark place and there
Kicking him in his dead groin
Just for the fun of it.

Young tree, unburdened
By anything but your beautiful natural blossoms
And dew, the dark
Blood in my body drags me
Down with my brother
In pain.

James Wright

Film Festival I / Harold Clurman

Perhaps because I am not a professional critic of motion pictures I do not primarily seek entertainment or purely cinematic values in them. I look for their socio-cultural implications. These include certain biographical or personal elements. Thus, I rarely ask myself whether or not what is being screened is a good or bad film.

It is evident from the audience reaction at the thirteenth Film Festival at Lincoln Center and from the reviews I have read that Luchino Visconti's latest picture, *Conversation Piece* (the Italian title may be rendered as "Family Group in an Interior"), is a bad one. Certain lines as unfortunately translated and dubbed in English, coupled with a disastrous piece of casting, provoked outright mockery. Still, I was not in the least bored or annoyed by it.

Conversation Piece reveals Visconti. Since his early Neo-Realist films he has become ever more fascinated by decoration and decadence. He is an immensely wealthy, highly cultivated man of ancient and noble Milanese lineage. Beautiful fabrics, furniture, painting, statuary and architecture—all the luxurious adornments that wealth affords—are a passion with him. The settings in his pictures are always palatially magnificent. But as a Communist, he fears and despises the Italian and generally the European rich. Most of them are drastic reactionaries—Fascists. Their mode of living, their mentality and political stance nevertheless exercise a hypnotic attraction. He can't get them out of his system.

He portrays their decadence, not only through their extravagance, their readiness to employ every means, including murder, to maintain their hegemony, their cynicism and depravity but also their tendency to flagrant homosexuality. The latter is willy-nilly equated with their total corruption. In all this there is an element of self-vilification.

The biographical aspect in *Conversation Piece* is highlighted by placing an American professor of art history (Burt Lancaster) amidst a perverted family of millionaire Italians who rent an apartment in the professor's *palazzo* in Rome. He is reluctant to have them (or anyone else) in his home; he is elderly, retired and world-weary. Above all, he desires privacy and quiet, but the wicked group—the satanically imperious mother, a son and daughter and the mother's German-born gigolo, for whom the apartment has been rented—craftily prevail upon the professor to yield the floor above his rooms to them. They gradually "take over"; they manage to make him a witness and un-

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wittingly a participant in their obscene intrigues. But strangely enough, the recluse aesthete (a widower) ends by being grateful for his contact with the amoral vandals he has allowed to invade the seclusion of his ivory tower; they have awakened him to reality—the reality of capitalism in the fantastic and lethal throes of its dissolution.

Still more remarkable, the gigolo of the story is not merely the bed mate of the Countess Brumonti (Silvana Mangano) and the quasi-seducer in the name of beauty of both her son and daughter, but he, being a former activist of the Left in Germany and still an aide and spy for the Italian anti-Fascists, is supposed to elicit our sympathy as the victim of a wicked society. For is he not a devotee of Mozart and a connoisseur of painting, and has he not warned the professor that the family will "break your balls"? His only fault, after all, is that he has been led into his bad life by his love of opulent pleasure! In the end we find him murdered, by the Fascists, presumably, because he knows too much.

The role, more's the pity, is played by Helmut Berger. Visconti must be infatuated with Berger (he also played in the same director's *The Damned*). Berger is impeccably handsome—as is most of the cast in *Conversation Piece*—but his good looks are like Dresden china; a superb surface, empty inside. The use of this actor is emblematic of the film's extraordinary confusion and the brilliant disarray of Visconti's being. The paradox is that, while the film as a whole is a mess, I found it absorbing. For withal there is a quotient of truth in it—individual in regard to its director, social as a reflection of a section of the upper classes in the country which produced it.

Another film, this one from West Germany, *Fist-Right of Freedom* (I do not understand the title) centers on a homosexual as the sacrificial lamb of the corrupt rich. The original touch in this instance is that the homosexual is a "proletarian"—referred to as such in the picture—first employed at an amusement park. He is lucky enough to win 500,000 marks in a lottery and becomes the consort of a young man whose family owns a bindery that is on the brink of bankruptcy. It is saved by the proletarian's willingness to invest his winnings in their business. Sincerely in love, the guileless youth is treated first with an education which includes an expensive sports car, clothes of high fashion, holidays in sumptuous resorts—all of which is paid for with his own money. He nevertheless finds himself embarrassing his "partner" and his partner's parents by his uncouth table manners, his plebeian conversation, his ignorance. When the bindery business goes bad again and founders, he is fleeced of all he has, without hope of recompense, and sees himself as a subject of perpetual exploitation. His lover takes on another from his own well-heeled circle. He commits suicide.

The film is slickly made, well directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who acts the central role ably. It is both discreet and frank in its treatment of the homosexual milieu which constitutes almost the only society we meet in the film. There is something pat about the whole presentation, so that it fails to stir or convince. The bourgeoisie in such films are always vicious, the poor always betrayed. The new cliché has it that evil consumes all. It is generally overlooked that it is not the exceptional—thieves, assassins, drug addicts, derelicts and sundry other oddballs—who should engage our attention, but the great majority of ordinary, unsensational people who are the most oppressed and depressed citizens of our civilization. The Italian director Olmi, the late Japanese director Ozu, are among the very few who seem to have understood this.

I found myself caught up in Orson Welles's *F for Fake*, not for its cinematic virtues but on account of my interest in Welles as a person.

The film concerns itself with such self-declared frauds as Clifford Irving, author of the bogus biography of Howard Hughes, who also wrote a biography of Elmyr de Hory, the fantastic forger of Matisse, Modigliani and Picasso paintings. The picture, shot in

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LAC D'AMOUR
(On a painting by Magritte)

Clearly, the lake is too large.
It has seeped up, past the horizon, forming
rivulets and pools in the sky. The sky
shrinks from it, and a white house
behind a stand of trees is obscured
but undamaged by the waters.

Two swans, oblivious
of these conditions, swim in a pair,
their necks a procession of esses.
They are blind to the new horizon,
to the word "amour," its letters
enlarging their pond.

They might paddle, safe
and contained, far beyond their usual limits.
But they do not, for they are blind,
love, to the word that binds
lake trees and sky, altered,
incurably, together.

Margaret Ryan

semi-documentary form, mixes fact and fiction—an exercise in filmic prestidigitation.

Welles has always practiced tricks of magic. Part of his artistry lies in his use of "mystery." He has sought to transfigure himself and his work into something strangely out of this world. He has delighted in subterfuge and imaginative deceit, in alternation from Jekyll to Hyde, in masks. He launched his career by a now self-confessed lie: at an early age he told the credulous people in the Dublin theatre that he was a famous American actor and, having been cast in several good parts there, he was received in America as an actor of considerable repute in Ireland.

He has always played with the media of radio, stage and screen as with gigantically astonishing toys. He thinks fantastically and big. An arch-showman, he doesn't wish to be known for what he is but for what he might appear to be. He is a charlatan of genius, committed in life as in art to the theatre which tells lies to reveal truth. In his new film, he celebrates with intriguing candor the fake and the faker. He is so devoted to the psychological *double entendre* that he frequently outsmarts himself and very nearly nullifies his enormous talent. He has fashioned a fabulous persona for himself behind which lurks a greater degree of vulnerability than we might suppose.

He has always created new faces for himself; one of them was that of a bohemian clown of Falstaffian disposition, posture and weight. But lo! now that he exposes in *F for Fake* this inner compulsion to parade his dazzling ambiguity, he looks as if he had come into his own more fully than ever before. There is something impressively complete in his present disguise. He was handsome in his youth (in the first part of *Citizen Kane*, for example) but there was something unformed, unborn in his countenance. Now he is a man, a very special man, but a whole man. He has developed into himself.

As film, the best of the lot thus far at the Festival is Jean Renoir's first (1931) talking picture, *La Chienne* (*The Bitch*), now being shown for the first time in New York. As a story it is little more than what the French call *un fait divers*, a news item of slight importance. A middle-aged clerk married to a harridan whose former husband, a sergeant, was presumed to have fallen in World War I, develops a wild crush on a nitwit trollop who is the mistress of a sickeningly fatuous pimp. The clerk, who relieves the drabness of his job and home life by painting, is mulcted by the girl and the pimp: they accept money from him, some of it stolen from his place of employment and some of it provided by the sale of his paintings the poor sap lets her have. After finding her in bed with her lover, he leaves his wife, ready to forgive the girl's weakness, and pleads with her to go away with h'm. When she refuses and laughs at his abject devotion to her, he stabs her to death. The police exonerate him, while the pimp is found guilty of the crime.

The plot pattern is similar to that of the Marlene Dietrich-Emil Jannings film *The Blue Angel*. The German film treated the material in an atmosphere of gloomy eroticism; Renoir is ironic, as if to say *c'est la vie*—sad and funny, yet nothing to weep about; in fact, rather humdrum, to be noted as one of the little happenings of daily existence. In the closing sequence we see the ertswhile clerk now become an old bum hobnobbing with another of his kind, the long-absent sergeant, who had not been killed in that war and who had deserted his wife. They joke together, taking their circumstances for granted as a not too wretched or pitiable condition of life.

Two things give the picture a quality which redeems the essential banality of its subject. First is Renoir's light, almost casual, touch. There is no stress, no suspense, no melodrama—only an easy notation of everyday sights, sounds, occurrences and people of the obscure, unglamorous Paris streets. Then, too, there is Michel Simon as the clerk, painter and eventual down-and-outer.

Michel Simon, whom as a student in Paris I saw many times on the stage, was a phenomenon. He had no intention of embarking on or preparing for the career he began to pursue almost accidentally and to some extent unwillingly. He ended by appearing in 118 films and seventy plays. He was in every way an oddity. He was ugly and wonderful. His broken nose seems to have made his diction defective. There was a heavy nasality in his tone which manifested itself in a sort of choked mumble. Yet every line he said was always perfectly intelligible. One wondered if he was really an actor at all. He said of himself in a filmed interview (also shown at the Festival) that he was not an artist, only an "imitator," he meant a "character." He never showed himself as he was: he quotes Pascal to the effect that "the 'I' is hateful." But the truth is that no matter how diverse his characterizations, and some of them were grotesque, he was always himself—eccentric, with something animal-like about him (he collected and lived with all sorts of animals) and thoroughly, earthily, human. He was indeed a lump of humanity, semi-articulate and constantly expressive. There were in him traits of cruelty and indifference, yet even with these, always an unmistakable warmth in him, a hidden hurt, an ever present suffering, often very funny combined with a somehow hangdog sadness. He was a man in a maze beyond his comprehension. □

(To be continued)

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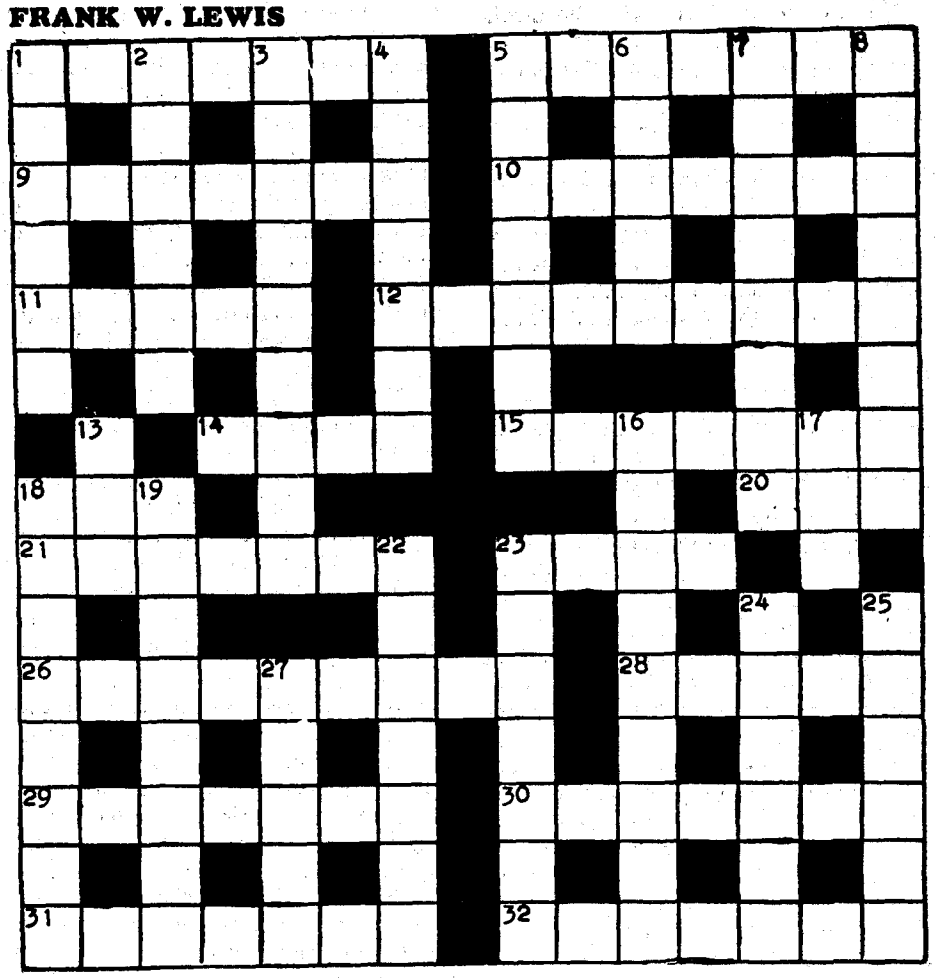
Crossword Puzzle No. 1603

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 23 down Everyone healthy and moral—but there may be more to come! (3,4,3,4)
5 Two animals representing British character? (7)
9 Christian tongue. (7)
10 Grenville's ship. (7)
11 It's obvious if it were on H-Row it would be upset. (5)
12 Religious assembly and shrine, possibly. (9)
14 and 23 across Meadows can—well, can be rented. (8)
15 One type might be a bit like a large number in an irritant. (7)
18 Fish, in general, coming back. (3)
20 and 21 One might be good at making sacrifices, but insecticides may have made it outdated. (3,7)
23 See 14 across
26 How the office basket might be marked without any indication of time under water. (9)
28 See 1 down
29 What Africanus was to Scipio. (7)
30 Confess, it's a little different from an up-town circle! (3,2,2)
31 Seems an odd shape in a body! (2,5)
32 Such waters are reputedly still in the extreme. (7)

DOWN

1, 13 down and 28 across One does not necessarily have a poor vocabulary. (1,3,2,3,5)
2 Goes on some trees. (6)
3 It probably involves passing, in one sense. (9)
4 Plaguey things! (7)
5 Filled with melancholy and melodramatic energy. (7)
6 Reception on landing? (5)
7 A personal problem of a cad and a ruffian? (8)
8 Verdure. (8)
13 See 1 down
16 Tolerance we perhaps were given by our parents? (9)
17 Like 18 across, one type is slippery. (3)
18 Bad times, consumed by what may be only guessed at. (8)
19 Similar to wisteria. (8)
22 Possibly reunite the train. (7)
23 See 1 across
24 One might get you most of the way home. (6)
25 Corset which would have to be fitted for such as 22. (6)
27 Lots of cities sometimes have them, but they're gloomy. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1602

ACROSS: 6 Offa; 10 Neutral; 11 Cocteau; 12 and 8 As snug as a bug in a rug; 14 It's a date; 15 and 1 across Cat on a Hot Tin Roof; 16 No fair; 18 Positive; 22 Return to sender; 24 Eschews; 25 Alabama; 26 Tidy; 27 Bottle caps. DOWN: 1 Hungarians; 2 Trusses; 3 In round figures; 4 Reliant; 7 Frelimo; 9 Accusative case; 13 Face creams; 17 Fleeced; 19 Odorant; 20 Indiana; 21 Enesco; 23 and 5 down Feet of clay.

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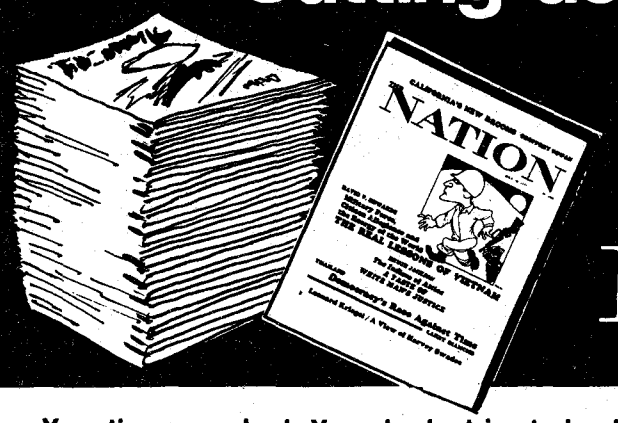

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• **1961** A special issue of The NATION featured Fred J. Cook's probe of the CIA. It revealed facts that make front-page stories today. Congress is finally investigating.

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• **1974** "The Hot River Valley," a hair-raising study of nuclear power reactors and the Plutonium they produce, caused shock waves throughout the country. Since then, many plants have been shut down, and the Atomic Energy Commission dissolved. The press and the public are now catching on to the dangers that NATION readers feared a year ago.

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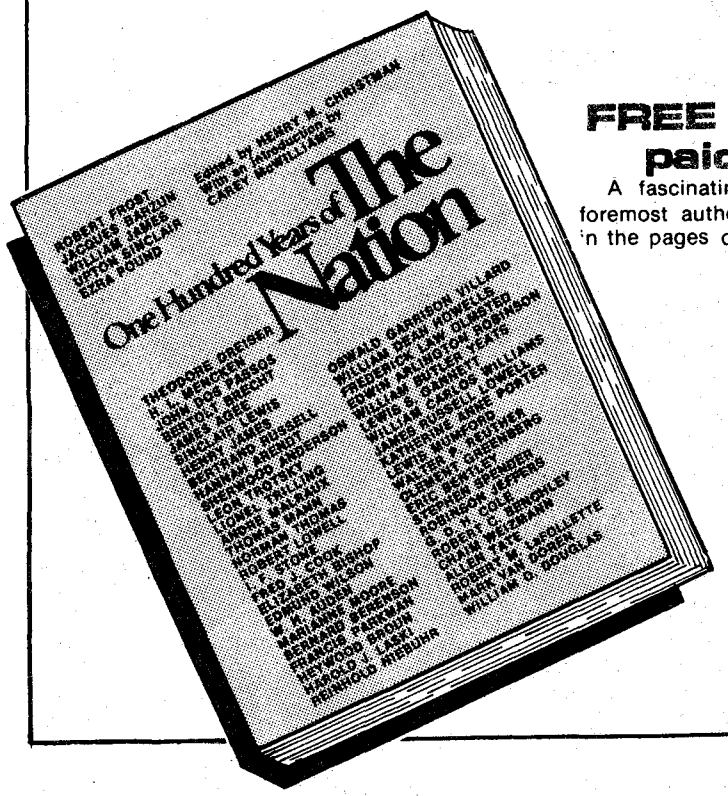

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